

# VUMC Revises COVID-19 Masking Guidance

In response to new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations and data that indicate fully vaccinated people infected with the delta variant of COVID-19 can still spread virus to others, VUMC is revising its masking guidance as follows:

- Masks, when worn, must be over both the mouth and nose.
- Masking is required for all persons, regardless of vaccination status, in all areas of VUMC including all clinical, non-clinical, research and public areas. (Ex. Common public areas such as cafeterias, food courts, break rooms, research labs, conference rooms, bathrooms, elevators and waiting rooms).
- Surgical masks must be worn in clinical areas, defined as areas where patients and visitors are present.
- Cloth masks can still be worn in non-clinical areas.
- Masking is required when riding on a VUMC shuttle, regardless of vaccination status.
- Masks may be removed:
  - **ONLY** if a person is setting in their assigned workspace
  - **AND** can maintain at least 6 feet of distance from all others (Ex. Offices, cubicles, lab benches, and desks).
  - When eating and drinking. (Note: Unvaccinated individuals should avoid eating and drinking with others indoors.)
  - When wearing a respirator as a part of isolation precautions/personal protective equipment.
- When a person is unable to wear a facemask due to a medical necessity, medical condition or disability, a face shield should be worn.
- For hearing impaired persons or persons who rely on reading lips to communicate, a clear mask may be worn except when entering a COVID-19 isolation room.

Rising infections indicate we must continue to do our part to prevent spread of COVID-19 and help end the pandemic. Remember that although the delta variant of COVID-19 may be spread by vaccinated persons, the vaccines remain highly effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization and deaths due to COVID-19 with 99% of deaths due to COVID-19 occurring in unvaccinated individuals. Getting your COVID-19 vaccine remains your best method of protection against this serious infection.