

Community Weekly

4.5.21

Opening to Phase 2/ Guidance for the Fully Vaccinated

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On April 2, 2021 the Roanoke City & Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD) announced that local residents over the age of 16 who want to be vaccinated and who are pre-registered on vaccinate.virginia.gov will be invited to schedule a vaccination appointment at one of our local clinics. After receiving 17,000 first and second doses last week, we expect to distribute at least 9,000 first and second doses this week. The increased supply of vaccine will allow the RCAHD to expand vaccine eligibility to “Phase 2” of the Virginia Department of Health vaccination plan, which includes any person aged 16 years and up who lives or works in Virginia.

As more and more community members are vaccinated, it is important to understand what kind of activities are safe for people who are fully vaccinated. People are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine.

If you do not meet these criteria, you are not considered to be fully vaccinated. In that case, it is essential that you keep following all COVID-19 prevention recommendations until you are fully vaccinated.

Once you are fully vaccinated:

- You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask or staying 6 feet apart.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from a single household (for example, visiting with relatives who all live together) without masks or staying 6 feet apart, unless any of the unvaccinated individuals or their household members are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- If you travel in the United States, you do not need to get tested before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel.
- If you have been exposed to COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine or get tested for COVID. (If you are a healthcare provider or live in a long-term care facility, there may be exceptions to this exemption.)

Although fully vaccinated people are less likely to get and spread COVID-19, they should still wear masks in public and practice physical distancing including avoiding crowds. According to recently updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people should continue to delay travel until they are fully vaccinated. Masks (over the mouth and nose, please!) are still required on public transportation including planes, trains and buses. The good news is that, for example, fully vaccinated grandparents can fly to visit their healthy grandkids without getting a COVID-19 test or self-quarantining, as long as they follow other recommended measures while traveling.

The combination of getting vaccinated and continuing to follow CDC recommendations provides the best protection from COVID-19 for you and your family. Until more of us are vaccinated, none of us is completely safe. By helping to bring an end to the COVID-19 pandemic, you are

getting all of us closer to a time in which we can enjoy daily life, family events, work and school without distancing, without masks and without fear.