

# FACT

## Why the Delta Variant is No Joke

**The delta variant is a strain of the coronavirus that developed from mutations of the virus. It is known to be more contagious than previous variants and causes more severe illness. There is also increased risk for hospitalization in those infected, primarily in the unvaccinated.**

**FACT: The delta variant is Louisiana and Mississippi's dominant strain.**

Reports from the CDC reveal that the delta variant spreads at least 50% faster than the original strain of COVID-19 and transmits a higher amount of viral particles to those infected. The delta variant has become the dominant strain in our region and across the United States.

**FACT: You are at much greater risk if you are unvaccinated.**

Nearly all patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in the U.S. are unvaccinated. Louisiana and Mississippi rank among the lowest in the nation in vaccination rates, leading to the high infection and hospitalization rates in our states. Getting vaccinated protects you from contracting the virus, but most importantly, it protects you from the more severe symptoms experienced by unvaccinated individuals that lead to hospitalization and death.

**FACT: Younger people are more susceptible.**

Unlike previous strains of the virus, the delta variant is having a greater impact on infection rates and hospitalizations among children and younger people. A recent study showed that children and adults under age 50 were 2.5 times more likely to become infected with delta compared to those older than 50 years. Our hospitals are caring for more children with COVID-19 now than at any other point in the pandemic.

**FACT: Those infected with the delta variant carry higher levels of virus than with earlier strains.**

The delta variant can transmit infection much faster than previous strains. One study has shown that vaccination, while still extremely protective against severe illness, is slightly less effective against the delta variant. And while breakthrough infections for fully vaccinated people are still relatively infrequent, these people still carry a similar level of viral load as unvaccinated individuals. This means they can still spread the infection to others.

**FACT: Breakthrough infections in vaccinated individuals rarely result in hospitalizations or deaths.**

**Get vaccinated!** The vast majority of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 at St. Tammany Health System's Covington hospital are unvaccinated. In order to protect ourselves and our loved ones from delta and other variants that could emerge in the future, a significant portion of the population must be vaccinated.

**FACT: Fully vaccinated people should continue to wear masks.**

The delta variant has proven to be more contagious and is spreading rapidly throughout Louisiana and Mississippi. Across the region, more people are hospitalized with COVID-19 now than any of the previous COVID-19 surges. During this time of uncontrolled viral spread, fully vaccinated individuals should protect themselves and others by practicing good hand hygiene, wearing face masks and social distancing in public gatherings. Avoiding large gatherings completely will further reduce your risk.

Schedule your vaccination appointment today through **the MyChart app** or by calling

**(985) 898-4001**. Visit [StTammany.health/COVID19](https://StTammany.health/COVID19) for more information on COVID in our community.

For additional COVID-19 information and resources, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov)) or the Louisiana Department of Health ([ldh.la.gov](https://ldh.la.gov)) website.

