

FACT

It's My Choice – The Risks of Remaining Unvaccinated

If you are unsure about getting the COVID-19 vaccine, please take the time to discuss your concerns with your physician. Many people who choose not to get vaccinated are putting themselves and others at much greater risk. Healthcare professionals and experts strongly recommend that everyone get vaccinated as soon as possible.

FACT: The vaccines can protect you from serious illness and death.

The vaccines remain highly effective at protecting people from serious illness, hospitalization and death against all current COVID-19 variants. As infection and hospitalization rates continue to rise to the highest levels of the pandemic, approximately 88% of those hospitalized with COVID at St. Tammany Health System since July 1, 2021, have been unvaccinated.

FACT: High rates of unvaccinated individuals are leading to more breakthrough infections.

Though breakthrough infections among vaccinated individuals were always expected, communities with higher levels of unvaccinated residents are seeing larger numbers of breakthrough cases. The risk for breakthrough infection in fully vaccinated people cannot be completely eliminated as long as there is continued community transmission of the virus. Getting vaccinated is the key to stopping community transmission.

FACT: Unvaccinated individuals risk the health of those we need to protect the most.

An unvaccinated person who gets infected can pass the virus to a vaccinated person. And while the vaccine provides great protection from serious illness, extra precautions must still be taken to protect those who are on certain medications or have a seriously weakened immune system. Unvaccinated individuals pose a threat to these vulnerable populations in our communities.

FACT: Delaying vaccination prolongs the impacts of the virus on everyone.

Those waiting too long to be vaccinated are allowing the virus to continue spreading in their communities. As the virus continues to spread, it will mutate and new variants such as delta will emerge. It is imperative that everyone who can get vaccinated does so as soon as possible. The sooner you get vaccinated, the sooner you and others are protected.

FACT: If you have already had COVID-19 and recovered, you should still get vaccinated.

Even if you have already recovered from COVID-19, you could be reinfected with another variant of the COVID-19 virus. Studies have shown that vaccination provides a strong boost in protection from other variants in people who have recovered from COVID-19.

Schedule your vaccination appointment today through **the MyChart app** or by calling **(985) 898-4001**. Visit 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) or the Louisiana Department of Health (ldh.la.gov) website.

