



**May 13, 2021**

**CDC announces major masking guideline changes**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) announced Thursday afternoon that fully vaccinated people no longer have to wear masks or physically distance for most indoor and outdoor activities and gatherings. While there are a few exceptions, the new guidelines offer considerably more freedoms to those who are at least two weeks past final doses of their COVID-19 vaccine.

Officials say the pronouncement is a result of emerging “real world” scientific data showing vaccination has had an efficacy rate over 90 percent in preventing mild and severe disease, hospitalization and death; and has been effective against COVID variants currently circulating in the United States. Data also shows vaccinated people appear less likely to spread the virus.

There are exceptions to the no-mask guidance. Masks will still be required when using public transportation, in most healthcare settings, schools, and in correctional facilities and homeless shelters. Anyone with a compromised immune system, even if fully vaccinated, should consult with their medical provider regarding appropriate precautions. It should be noted some businesses and workplaces may still elect to require mask use as well.

This change in policy is a huge step in reclaiming normal life, and Douglas County Health Department is hopeful numbers continue to decline so these measures can stay in place. We remain fully committed to helping provide COVID-19 vaccines to eligible residents wishing to take this life-saving step. For more information, log onto our website at [dhealthdept.org](http://dhealthdept.org). You can also find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube; or by calling 217-253-4137.