**Update on the SARS CoV2 Delta Variant in the US. 7/23/21**

* The Delta variant of the pandemic SARS CoV2 virus was first identified in India in December 2020.
* The first case in the US was identified in March 2021 and now makes up more than 85% of all US cases, and >90% of infections in unvaccinated people.
* The Delta variant has been found in all 50 US states.
* The Delta variant is much more transmissible than earlier SARS CoV2 variants, making it one of the most contagious viruses known. The variant is estimated to be 60% more transmissible.
* Unvaccinated people are getting infected with much shorter exposure times and over distances greater than 6 feet.
* New daily COVID cases have increased 55% since last week, with cases rising in 46 states. Hospitalizations are up 52%
* The Delta variant replicates to much higher levels in unvaccinated persons than other variants, resulting in viral loads more than 1000X times higher. This high replication is associated with more severe disease of longer duration, including in children and young adults.
* More than 97% of people hospitalized with Covid-19 disease due to the Delta variant are unvaccinated
* >99% of deaths are unvaccinated hospitalized patients infected by the Delta variant
* The dominance of the Delta variant infections in unvaccinated people has resulted in the CDC referring to it as the "[pandemic of the unvaccinated](https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/19/health/us-coronavirus-monday/index.html)."
* It is not known at this point how likely it is for a vaccinated person with a breakthrough infection due to the Delta variant to be contagious to others. However, vaccinated persons with breakthrough infections by the Delta variant are not experiencing any disease or only mild disease.
* A vaccinated person around other fully vaccinated people is probably pretty safe and would not need precautions like masking and distancing. On the other hand, a vaccinated person who is exposed constantly to unvaccinated people in crowded, indoor settings where no one is wearing masks, could become infected themselves. And even if they don't have symptoms, there is definitely the possibility that they could carry the virus and infect others.
* The CDC has not issued any new recommendations for mask wearing and physical distancing since May 13 when it said fully vaccinated people don't have to wear masks indoors or outdoors
* Some public health experts have recommended indoor mask mandates in places where vaccinated and unvaccinated people are mixing, especially in locations where the number of new COVID cases are rising but the vaccination rate is low.

The information and statistics in this document were retrieved from the CDV website, published studies, and media reports.

Prepared by

Cynda Crawford, DVM, PhD

UF Maddie’s Shelter Medicine Program

crawfordc@ufl.edu

352-258-9263