

July 20, 2021

The Delta Variant of COVID-19 has been making the news as cases surge worldwide. This highly transmissible coronavirus is present in all 50 states and accounts for almost 52 percent of all new infections in the United States. The good news is all three coronavirus vaccines authorized in the United States offer strong protection against severe disease and death from COVID -19. Preliminary data from several states over the past several months suggests that 99.5 percent of COVID -19-related deaths occurred among unvaccinated people. The Justus team strives to keep residents, staff and families informed, so please see the information on the coronavirus variants below.

What are Variants?

Viruses constantly change through mutation, creating variants, and are expected to occur naturally over time. Some variants die out while others can become more common if they spread easily. Some variations allow the virus to spread more easily or make it resistant to treatments or vaccines. That's why variants must be carefully monitored.

Variant Classifications

Variants of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) have been emerging and circulating around the world throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. There are three classes of SARS-CoV-2 variants based on how concerning they are:

- **Variant of Interest** — May lead to outbreaks but not widespread in the country
- **Variant of Concern** — Shows evidence of increased transmission and more severe disease. This includes the Alpha, Beta, Delta and Gamma variants.
- **Variant of High Consequence** — Makes vaccines and treatments much less likely to work well. To date, no variants of high consequence have been identified in the United States.

Delta Variant

As of June 19, the Delta variant accounted for at least 30% of new COVID-19 infections in the United States and has now become proportionally the most commonly sequenced strain in Indiana. The Delta variant is considered a Variant of Concern because it:

- Spreads more easily according to the CDC
- Has mutations on the spike protein, making it easier to infect human cells and therefore more contagious
- Is now the dominant strain in the US

Delta Variant Symptoms

The symptoms are similar to those seen with the original COVID-19 strain including:

- Persistent Cough
- Headache
- Fever
- Sore Throat
- Runny Nose

What Does the Delta Variant Mean for UNVACCINATED People?

- People who haven't been fully vaccinated are MOST at risk.
- The age susceptibility has reversed and is hitting our younger population.
- Kids and younger adults are susceptible.
- In the U.K., Children and unvaccinated adults under 50 were 2.5 times more likely to become infected with the Delta variant.
- Children are 2.5 times more likely to become infected with the Delta variant.

What Does the Delta Variant Mean for VACCINATED People?

- People who haven't been fully vaccinated are LESS at risk.
- Scientists are looking at how the DELTA variant can cause breakthrough cases, or infections among people who are fully vaccinated.
- So far, infections of the Delta variant among people who are fully vaccinated is rare, does not occur or is extremely rare with hospitalization.

What Does the Delta Variant Mean for Justus Communities?

- The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDOH) and the CDC are working together on a study to look at Long Term Care facilities and identify if outbreaks are the result of the Alpha or Delta variants.
- The CDC reports that a booster is not needed at this time.
- If there are three or more positive cases at any time in one of our licensed communities, we will participate in a surveillance protocol with the ISDOH to determine if a variant is present and will report accordingly.

Justus Senior Living communities will continue to update policies and procedures to comply with state and federal guidelines to keep our residents safe and provide you with updates along the way. It is more important than ever to be vaccinated, so please schedule your vaccination for the protection of yourself and others.

As always, it is a privilege and honor to serve our residents.

With gratitude,

Justus Leadership