

News Brief

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CDC Loosens Mask-wearing Guidance for Most of U.S. Population

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced updates to its mask-wearing recommendations, loosening guidance for a majority of the U.S. population.

The CDC provides [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) as a tool to help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. These levels can be low, medium or high, and are determined by hospital beds being used, hospital admissions and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area. These levels inform the agency's guidance on mask-wearing, among other topics such as COVID-19 vaccines and testing.

The agency now only recommends that individuals in high-risk areas wear a mask in indoor settings. Currently, around 70% of the U.S. population is in a low- or medium-risk county. As such, the CDC would no longer recommend that these individuals wear a mask indoors.

Notably, the CDC's new mask-wearing guidelines apply to its guidance for K-12 schools, meaning that it no longer recommends masks as a COVID-19 prevention step for schools in low- or medium-risk counties. Previously, the agency had recommended universal indoor masking in educational settings.

Individuals are always welcome to wear a mask at any time if they feel safer with it, according to the CDC. Additionally, people with symptoms, a positive test or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should continue to wear a mask.

“With widespread population immunity, the overall risk of severe disease is now generally lower.”

- CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky

Next Steps

To learn more, the CDC provides a [tool](#) to find local COVID-19 Community Levels and the recommended prevention steps by county.

The agency notes that as the coronavirus pandemic continues to evolve, this guidance could be subject to change.

Ollis/Akers/Arney Human Resources Consulting will keep you updated on any noteworthy developments.

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