

Health Officials Urge Vaccinations As COVID-19 Variant Concern Spreads

By Administrator

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There is increasing urgency for people to get vaccinated against COVID-19 as the more dangerous new Delta variant is rapidly spreading in the United States, including in North Carolina. Yesterday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention classified the Delta variant as a 'variant of concern' because it spreads faster than current COVID-19 variants. Early studies from the United Kingdom have also shown a possible increased risk of hospitalization in people infected with the Delta variant. The currently available COVID-19 vaccines are the best protection against the virus and its variants. The news comes as research is showing medical problems from COVID-19 can last even for those who did not have symptoms. A study by FAIR Health found that 19% of asymptomatic COVID-19 patients develop long-term symptoms such as pain, breathing difficulties, fatigue and high blood pressure. In addition, the study found that 27.5% of COVID-19 patients who were symptomatic but not hospitalized also developed lasting symptoms.

"While our COVID-19 trends are good, we are still seeing unvaccinated people hospitalized and dying from this virus, and many struggling with long-term effects like having difficulty breathing when doing simple activities. This is preventable if you get a vaccine to protect yourself and your community," said NC Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D.

Getting a vaccine is the best way for people to protect themselves from COVID-19. Rigorous clinical trials among thousands of people ages 12 and up have proven the vaccines are safe and effective against all circulating variants. More than 140 million Americans have now been safely vaccinated and protected from serious illness and virus-related hospitalization and death.

North Carolinians now have another reason to get vaccinated. Four vaccinated North Carolinians 18 and older will win \$1 million each and four North Carolinians ages 12 to 17 will win tuition for post-secondary education. Drawings will run from June 23 through Aug. 4. All North Carolina residents 12 and older who have been vaccinated with at least one dose are eligible, some restrictions may apply. Those vaccinated starting June 10 are entered twice for each drawing — increasing the chance of winning for the newly vaccinated. Drawings will take place every other week on Wednesdays with the first drawing on June 23. New entries will close at midnight on the Sunday prior to the Wednesday drawing. Winners will be verified and then announced.

Learn more about the \$4 Million Summer Cash and Summer Cash 4 College Drawings at SummerVaxCash.com. For more information about COVID-19 vaccines and the state's Bringing Summer Back initiative, visit YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov or dial 1- 888-675-4567.