



City of Casa Grande

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

City Addresses Public Susceptibility to Delta Virus, Benefits and Potential Risks from Vaccination

Urges Residents to Move Beyond Hearsay to Get the Facts

Casa Grande, AZ (August 13, 2021) – We know many have grown tired and weary in the fight against Covid-19. Summer was slated to emerge as a major turning point to a level of normalcy; however, lagging vaccination numbers due to hesitancy have threatened to undo a great deal of hard-earned progress. Since the release of three highly effective vaccines, it has been a race to inoculate enough people to reduce avoidable spread, hospitalizations and deaths. The hope is that more in the community will reach for solid, factual information because the reality is --- a majority of American adults currently live with increased viral susceptibility to the Delta variant because of *known and unknown* co-morbidity factors.

Casa Grande is built on the foundational idea of community... one that understands shared responsibility and shared sacrifice for shared success. There's a lot of misinformation out there. The following takes a deep dive into *public susceptibility* to the Delta virus plus the benefits and potential risks from vaccination to help families achieve healthier outcomes for their household and the community.

Facts First...

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the highly contagious Delta variant now comprises more than 93% of current United States (U.S.) Covid-19 cases.

Yale Medicine epidemiologist Dr. F. Perry Wilson explained that "...Delta was spreading 50% faster than Alpha, which was 50% more contagious than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2. The CDC also said the following...



According to Arizona Department of Health Services, updated data for resident vaccination rates brings the Casa Grande closer to 56% (30k residents vaccinated), Pinal County to 38.6% and Arizona to 53.9%.

Approximately 99.5% of current U.S. hospitalizations and deaths are comprised of "**unvaccinated**" people.

This alone should lead one to believe that vaccines are vital in the fight against Covid and are doing their job in helping to *protect the vaccinated* from hospitalization and death... even if they do become infected.

Which Variants Concern the CDC Most?

According to the CDC, multiple variants of the virus that causes Covid-19 have been documented in the U.S. and globally during this pandemic. Some variations allow the virus to spread more easily or make it resistant to treatments or vaccines.

An increase in the number of cases will put more strain on healthcare resources, lead to more hospitalizations and potentially more deaths.

Currently, the CDC is monitoring 4 notable variants in the U.S:

- **Alpha:** This variant was first detected in the U.S. in December 2020. It was initially detected in the United Kingdom.
- **Beta:** This variant was first detected in the U.S. at the end of January 2021. It was initially detected in South Africa in December 2020.
- **Gamma:** This variant was first detected in the U.S. in January 2021. P.1 was initially identified in travelers from Brazil, who were tested during routine screening at an airport in Japan, in early January.
- **Delta:** This variant was first detected in the U.S. in March 2021. It was initially identified in India in December 2020. [Delta is currently the most prevalent variant in the U.S.]

The CDC warns that the Delta variant appears to spread as easily as chickenpox and cause more severe illness than previous strains in unvaccinated persons.

Who's at Higher Risk of Serious Symptoms?

The unvaccinated are at greatest risk. However, it is important to also consider one's own health condition and that of those around them. Severity and survival rates vary substantially from person-to-person depending on factors such as age, race and whether they have one or more pre-existing medical conditions (co-morbidity).

Studies show that 6 in 10 adults in the U.S. have a *chronic disease*; 4 in 10 have 2 or more.

There are serious conditions that increase risk of Covid-19 severe outcomes for those living with: Lung problems, asthma, heart disease, diabetes/obesity, cancer, certain blood disorders, chronic kidney or liver diseases, Down syndrome, organ/bone marrow transplants, HIV/AIDS or who are taking immune suppression medication like prednisone. Vaccination helps to improve health outcomes.



Casa Grande Mayor, Craig McFarland, urges residents to join the fight against Covid-19 and get vaccinated.

How Is Covid-19 Affecting Children?

According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), the number of children contracting Covid-19 has increased fivefold since the end of June with a “substantial” 84% jump in the last week alone. As of July 29, nearly 4.2 million children have tested positive for Covid-19 since the onset of the pandemic. Almost 72,000 cases were added last week, a substantial increase from the prior week when about 39,000 cases were reported.

Although most [reported SARS-CoV-2 infections in children](#) aged less than 18 years are asymptomatic or mild, the Delta strain appears to be impacting kids more than the original virus. The good news is that youngsters ages 12 and older are now able to receive a vaccination, especially now that children are already returning to in-person learning at school. Unfortunately, children under 12 are not yet able to be vaccinated and are relying on adults to help reduce risk of infection. Both Casa Grande Mayor, Craig McFarland, and the Academy recommend that parents talk to their child's pediatrician about personal health questions or concerns around Covid and vaccination.

“I urge residents to get vaccinated to help protect themselves and others,” said McFarland.

Why Vaccinate? Doesn't My Immune System Do the Same Thing?

The immune system is an amazing line of natural defense. It helps the body fight off infection and disease caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites or unhealthy cells such as cancer cells. It's working 24/7 on your behalf, but trouble may arise if it is compromised or suppressed.

A healthy immune system is crucial for the preservation of life, but a person's *susceptibility* to disease can *increase risk* of infection.

This is where your personal health choices and actions come into play to aid the immune system's response and effectiveness. For instance, you can [reduce susceptibility to disease](#) by cutting down on the number of pathogens you bring to your body's entry points (eyes, nose, mouth, etc.). That's why the CDC and other health experts have [recommended](#) washing hands, avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth, physically distancing and wearing a multi-layered mask. Personal choices affect risk and susceptibility to infection, according to several [studies](#) around vaccination and co-morbidities.

Vaccines work with your body's natural defenses to create immunity to specific diseases. Long ago, people realized that survivors of a disease didn't get that disease again. A British doctor is often credited with the first vaccine (for smallpox) in the 1790s, but a Chinese emperor who was a smallpox survivor himself started an inoculation program against the disease in the mid-1600s.

Vaccines help to increase a population's [herd immunity](#) responsibly without needless suffering of thousands through severe disease or death as a result of an **insufficient immune system response.**

Not every person's natural immune system has the full ability to fight off the same level of infection or disease. Such is the case for Covid-19 and the Delta variant as the current trend of infection and death shows. Getting vaccinated is a very important way of helping to reduce spread for others.

The Delta variant can *evade antibodies* that target certain parts of the virus, according to a new study published recently in Nature.

While many people can mount a strong, durable immune response that protects them against delta *after a previous infection*, some may generate a weak immune response and remain at risk. Therefore, experts advise people who have had Covid-19 to also get fully vaccinated, either with two doses of a messenger RNA (mRNA) shot or one dose of Johnson & Johnson's vaccine.

How Could the Vaccine Have Been Safely Made So Quickly?

Science isn't static. During a pandemic, science is in fast forward motion. Generally, there are continual updates in stats, facts and other conditions surrounding diseases, how they spread and our approach to limiting/reducing adverse reactions on people. This includes vaccination research and reducing potential side-effects while also trying to remedy disease. Such is the case for the three Covid-19 vaccinations currently being given in the fight against the disease. Fact sheets remain readily available to the public online for personal review and upon vaccination to help each person better understand risks and benefits: Pfizer--BionTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) - Janssen.

mRNA vaccines are relatively new but not unknown. mRNA vaccines have been studied before for flu, Zika, rabies and cytomegalovirus. Both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are comprised of mRNA technology. This benefitted researchers substantially during the creative process because the vaccines were able to be developed in a laboratory using readily available materials. This made a huge difference in speed of the final product. According to the CDC:

Researchers have been studying and working with *mRNA* vaccines for decades. This means the process was able to be standardized and scaled up, making vaccine development faster than traditional methods of making vaccines.

Scientists were also provided a head start thanks to studies from the National Institutes of Health that had already created a vaccine sequence that could be custom-made to fight different strains of coronavirus, like Covid-19. As soon as the necessary information about the virus that causes Covid-19 was available, scientists began designing the mRNA instructions for cells to build the unique spike protein into an mRNA vaccine. It was like a "plug-and-play" process because the major components were readily available.

Are there Risks to Vaccination?

Most early vaccine clinical trials involve fewer than 3,000 participants, however, more than 30,000 volunteers were engaged in early Covid-19 trials. While results from vaccine monitoring were overwhelmingly successful, some rare adverse reactions were noted. A rate of about 7 per 1 million vaccinated women have developed thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) when vaccinated with Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen Covid-19 vaccine. This occurred in females between 18 and 49. An alternative for this group is to vaccinate with Pfizer or Moderna. Cases of myocarditis and pericarditis in adolescents have been reported after getting a second dose of the mRNA Covid-19 vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna. The conditions remain rare, treatable and, so far, all those affected have successfully recovered.

Not every person is able to get vaccinated due to certain pre-existing medical conditions. A small few have also had allergic reactions. Nothing is without some level of risk in life, but there appears to be "much less risk" of serious illness and death for the vaccinated versus unvaccinated.

To date, over 354 million people in the United States have received at least one shot with over 167 million fully vaccinated.

According to [Arizona Department of Health Services](#), over 7 million doses have been administered in Arizona with close to 306k doses in Pinal County. Current resident vaccination rates bring the Casa Grande community closer to 56% (30k residents vaccinated), Pinal County to 38.6% and Arizona to 53.9%.

What About the Numbers Reported in the VAERS System?

According to the CDC, the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System](#) (VAERS) is raw, unfiltered data that may or may not signal an issue with a vaccination. While very important in monitoring vaccine safety on-the-go, VAERS reports alone cannot be used to determine if a vaccine caused or contributed to an adverse event or illness. Reports may contain information that is incomplete, inaccurate, coincidental or unverifiable. Most [reports](#) to VAERS are made voluntarily by parents and patients although providers are also required by law to submit reportable events following vaccinations. Individual biases may still be involved which creates specific limitations on how its data can be used scientifically in raw form. Data from VAERS reports should always be interpreted with these limitations in mind.

The CDC also explained that VAERS strengths are national in scope and can quickly provide an early warning of a safety problem with a vaccine. As part of CDC and Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) multi-system approach to post-licensure vaccine safety monitoring, VAERS is designed to rapidly detect unusual or unexpected patterns of adverse events, also known as "safety signals." If a safety signal is found in VAERS, further studies can be done in safety systems such as the CDC's Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD) or the Clinical Immunization Safety Assessment (CISA) project. These systems do not have the same scientific limitations as VAERS and can better assess health risks and possible connections between adverse events and a vaccine.

Please stay updated on substantiated, verified reporting at long-standing reputable agencies such as the [CDC](#), [FDA](#), World Health Administration ([WHO](#)) and National Institutes of Health ([NIH](#)) among others.

Why Worry If Most People Survive?

In a "highly generalized" population, most folk tend to survive Covid-19. However, folks also tend to look past the reality that many survivors live with long-term debilitating effects from the virus which may include damage to their lungs, kidneys, heart, brain and more. Your quality of life can be seriously and, sometimes, permanently transformed which can impact your ability to work, provide for your family, resume normal social activities and more.

The [U.S. Surgeon General](#) said last month that he had lost 10 of his own family members to Covid while others have lost none. So, a person's perspective and personal impact from COVID can vary tremendously. Losing one family member or beloved friend can leave a hole in your life and heart. Imagine losing 10.

45.4% of US adults are estimated to be at heightened risk of COVID-19 complications due to *co-morbidities*.

Estimates increase from 19.8% for ages 18-29 years to 80.7% for ages 80+ years, with state-to-state variation. People underestimate important role *co-morbidity* plays in infection *susceptibility*. Americans aren't as healthy as they believe. [Lean more](#). It can mean the difference between life or death.

Every death due to Covid-19, NOW, is mostly avoidable through simple vaccination. Numbers clearly demonstrate that vaccination *decreases* a person's overall risk for hospitalization and death. A failure to vaccinate *increases* risk. Each time a new strain develops, it has the potential to reduce vaccine effectiveness.

More than 99.99% of people fully vaccinated against Covid-19 have not had a breakthrough case resulting in hospitalization or death.

When Is Full FDA Vaccination Approval Expected?

Various news outlets approximate full FDA Covid-19 vaccination approvals in late September. According to a recent FDA [press release](#), the agency has just "...amended the emergency use authorizations for both Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines to allow for the use of an additional dose in certain immunocompromised individuals, specifically, solid organ transplant recipients or those who are diagnosed with conditions that are considered to have an equivalent level of immunocompromise."



Local faith leader, Father Ariel Lustan, from St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church discusses his moral responsibility to get vaccinated to help protect those around him.

Our Shared Responsibility, Shared Sacrifice for Shared Success

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines community as a unified body of individuals having joint ownership or participation. Casa Grande is only as strong as its community's willingness and commitment to helping each other succeed and thrive. It is incumbent upon all of us to help ensure the general health and well-being of our families, neighbors and friends.

With this in mind, please help avoid harmful rhetoric and misinformation. Seek

out reputable medical sources that you know, trust and have a longstanding history of providing legitimate scientific information. Please avoid repeating or re-sharing information that you aren't sure is completely accurate. Public health is about reducing risk to all life, including your own.

Get the facts. Please get vaccinated. Talk with your personal doctor or a local health expert today to help you and your family decide what's best for your personal situation. #StrongerTogetherCG

Please visit City [COVID-19 response](#), [community support](#) and [small business resources](#) to learn more.

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Founded in 1879, the mission of the City of Casa Grande is to provide a safe, pleasant community for all citizens. With a growing population of over 56,000, it is a city with amazing people and historic charm that can only be found in a small town. Still, it offers modern amenities and a broad range of recreation facilities and activities for residents of all ages that are available year-round.