



2019 Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 UPDATE



Updated May 20, 2021

Siragusa Transplantation Center

Frequently Asked Questions on Recent CDC Mask Guidance

Recently, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) provided updated guidance on the use of masks and social distancing for those who have been fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus. This guidance has generated a lot of questions as to what it means for transplant patients and their families.

The full CDC guidance can be found [here](#).

As with the previous guidance the Siragusa Transplantation Center has provided, the decisions that you and your family make come down to understanding and assessing the risk of each situation. There is always risk involved when being in a group environment, but these risks need to be balanced against the benefit. This is similar to how any time someone drives in a car, it comes with the risk of being injured in an accident. We use seat belts and follow the speed limit to limit the risk in a car, just as we can use masks and social distancing to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission, while not completely limiting activity.

HERE ARE SOME ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- 1. Can transplanted children be unmasked around other unmasked vaccinated people?** Based on the [AST Statement of Vaccinations](#), transplant recipients are encouraged to wear a mask and practice social distancing guidelines regardless of their vaccination status. Just like with other vaccines, early studies have shown that the response to the COVID vaccine in people who are immunocompromised is not always as strong as in the general population.
- 2. Can vaccinated family members be unmasked in crowds?** The CDC states that there is low risk for infection and transmission if you are fully vaccinated and not immunocompromised. It will always be safer to continue to wear a mask, so this is a decision that each family needs to make based on balancing their risk and what they know about the other unmasked people in a crowd.
- 3. Is it safe for a transplanted child to be in crowds with unmasked vaccinated people?** Your transplanted child should continue to wear a mask in these situations. There is greater risk if you are joining large crowds, such as an indoor sporting event or concert, than an outdoor socially-distanced sporting event, or a store that is not overly crowded.
- 4. Is it safe to dine indoors?** Again, discretion needs to be used in this scenario. There is always some risk, but restaurants that have social distancing and are not crowded would be the safer decision.
- 5. Should transplanted children attend in-person school or camps?** We have seen the toll that COVID-19 has put on the well-being of children in the U.S and feel it is important not to limit educational and developmental learning opportunities such as school and camp. At the current time, the CDC is requiring masks in schools. This will likely continue for some time, as the COVID-19 vaccine is not yet approved for children under the age of 12. Transplanted children should wear a mask at school or camp.