



Health Department News

Director of Health Dr. Anthony Chen issues mask directive for Pierce County.

You should wear a mask indoors in public spaces and outdoors where physical distancing is not possible regardless of vaccination status.

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Dr. Anthony L-T Chen, Director of Health for Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, issued a countywide mask directive Wednesday, Aug. 18. Everyone 5 years and older in Pierce County should wear a face covering both indoors in public spaces and outdoors where physical distancing is not possible regardless of vaccination status.

The directive applies in any place open to the public, including:

- Retail.
- Grocery stores.
- Government buildings.
- Any business or place where members of the public can enter freely.

It does not apply to non-public spaces, including businesses, offices, and other places of employment with limited access. Employers should continue to follow current guidance and requirements from the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries on worker safety](#).

Directives are actions from Health Officers to protect residents. You can [read the full text on our website](#).

Our data shows we are experiencing the longest and strongest COVID-19 case increase we've seen since the beginning of the pandemic. Cases and hospitalizations are rising in Pierce County and across the country, driven by the highly contagious Delta variant. Vaccinated people can still spread COVID-19, but they are at much lower risk of severe illness and death. Wearing masks in public will help protect us all.

"Masking will reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 for everyone, including customers, workers and children under 12 who cannot get vaccinated," Dr. Chen said. "I strongly urge everyone in Pierce County to follow this directive and to get vaccinated. We must use all the tools we have to keep our community safe."

Face coverings limit the transmission of droplets that could spread COVID-19. Droplets spread when you talk, laugh, sing, sneeze, or breathe. You could have the virus that causes COVID-19 and not know it and spread it to others who can become seriously ill. A face covering also [offers protection from receiving droplets from others](#).

Vaccinations are our best defense against COVID-19. They're safe, effective, and readily available for everyone 12 and older. Find your dose today at tpchd.org/vaxtothefuture.

Testing also remains an important tool to protect your health and slow the spread of COVID-19. If you have symptoms or might have been exposed, you should get tested whether or not you've been vaccinated. Find local testing sites at tpchd.org/gettested.

The state's mask order requires everyone to wear masks in:

- Healthcare settings.
- Childcare facilities.
- Camps.
- K-12 schools.
- Correctional facilities.
- Homeless shelters.
- On public transportation.

About Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department: Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's mission is to protect and improve the health of all people and places in Pierce County. As part of our mission, the Health Department tackles known and emerging health risks through policy, programs and treatment in order to protect public health. We are one of only 163 accredited health departments in the country and among six in the state to have met or exceeded the Public Health Accreditation Board's quality standards. Learn more at www.tpchd.org.



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