



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Feb. 25, 2022

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## **Statement From Public Health Commissioner Dr. Manisha Juthani Regarding CDC’s Updated COVID-19 Monitoring And School Bus Masking Requirements**

HARTFORD, Conn. —Friday afternoon, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a new framework to monitor the level of COVID-19 in communities that includes hospitalizations, hospital capacity, and cases. This new approach focuses on preventing hospitals and health care system from being overwhelmed and directing prevention efforts toward protecting people at high risk for severe illness.

This new tool and guidance does not change the recent masking guidance released by the Department of Public Health and the Connecticut State Department of Education—this tool assists local communities with their decision making.

It’s also important to note that as of Feb. 25, the CDC [does not require wearing of masks on buses or vans that are operated by public or private school systems](#). This includes early care and education/childcare programs. With this framework in mind, CDC experts are working now to update guidance for K-12 schools, early childhood education facilities, and institutes of higher education.

The COVID-19 Community Level will inform CDC recommendations on prevention measures, like masking and testing. The guidelines include a [color-coded system available on the CDC website](#) of “Low,” “Medium,” and “High” which are scheduled to be updated weekly:

- **Low—Green:** Residents in these counties should stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and get tested if they have symptoms.
- **Medium—Yellow:** Residents who are at high risk for severe illness in these counties should talk to their health care providers about when they need to wear a mask and take other precautions. These residents should also stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and get tested if they have symptoms.
- **High—Orange:** Residents in these counties should wear a mask indoors in public; stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and get tested if they have symptoms. Additional precautions may be needed for residents who are at high risk for severe illness.

(more)

Currently all Connecticut counties—except for Middlesex County—are listed in the Low/Green category. Middlesex County is listed in the Medium/Yellow category. It's important to note that residents who are more comfortable wearing a mask should continue to do so if they wish. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 also should wear a mask.

Today's CDC updates show just how far we have come since the early days of the pandemic. We will remain vigilant and continue to monitor COVID-19 as we move to a new phase of this pandemic. We will monitor wastewater levels of SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19 cases in our communities, vaccination rates, and emergence of possible variants so that we can be prepared for future surges of the virus. Thank you to the residents of Connecticut who have used all the tools at our disposal to help us get to this stage.