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Fully Vaccinated People Don't Need to Wear Masks Outside in Small Groups or During Personal Activities, CDC Says

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Persons fully vaccinated against Covid-19 don't have to wear masks when performing such activities as riding bikes, jogging alone, hiking, walking or gathering in small groups, said federal health authorities Tuesday, marking another major easing of restrictions on the path toward normalcy for the inoculated.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the above-mentioned easing of restrictions also apply when dining at outdoor portions of restaurants and for small gatherings that may include people who are not vaccinated.

Even so, the CDC said people who are fully vaccinated should still wear masks where the risk of Covid-19 is substantially greater, such as at concerts, sporting events and other large-gathering activities.

The federal health agency also recommended mask-wearing indoors when among unvaccinated individuals, shopping in a mall, visiting a barber or hair salon, at the movie theater, museum or in a crowded house of worship. If singing in an in-door choir, the vaccinated should still wear masks, advised the CDC.

The new guidelines follow mounting scientific data that indicate the risk of spreading Covid-19 is low outdoors and even lower for the fully vaccinated. Federal health officials are hoping that today's announcement will boost vaccine adoption as the pace has been showing signs of decline.

“The message is clear: ‘You’re vaccinated, guess what? You get to return to a more normal lifestyle. If you’re not vaccinated, you’re still in danger,” Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said Tuesday in an interview with CBS This Morning (via the Wall Street Journal).

“It’s the return of freedom,” said Dr. Mike Saag, an infectious disease expert at the University of Alabama at Birmingham who welcomed the change (via AP News). “It’s the return of us being able to do normal activities again. We’re not there yet, but we’re on the exit ramp. And that’s a beautiful thing.”

The [previous CDC guidance](#) allowed vaccinated people to gather in small groups among themselves without masks.

Vaccination doses had been increasing every day in the U.S. until it peaked at 3.8 million a day this month. The CDC said more than half of all Americans have received at least the first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine.