



South Central Public Health District
1020 Washington Street North
Twin Falls, ID 83301
208-737-5900
www.phd5.idaho.gov



NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 15, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Delta Variant Identified in South Central Idaho, COVID-19 Cases on the Rise

Twin Falls County, Idaho — South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) received laboratory confirmation of one case of the COVID-19 Delta variant (B.1.617.2), in Twin Falls County.

“The Delta variant is called the fittest and fastest for good reason,” said Tanis Maxwell, SCPHD lead epidemiologist. “We’ve watched this strain spread quickly throughout India, the UK, and now the U.S. Identifying just one case in our region means it is likely there are more that simply haven’t been identified.”

Evidence shows that the Delta variant is significantly more infectious than the original COVID-19 strain and is considered a “variant of concern” by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [CDC data](#)* indicate about 58 percent of cases in the United States were caused by this variant, making it the most common strain circulating in the country.

Those who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of contracting the virus or spreading it to others. As of July 13th, about 42percent of eligible south central Idaho residents are fully vaccinated. That number drops to about 22 percent when only including younger residents, between 12 and 34 years.

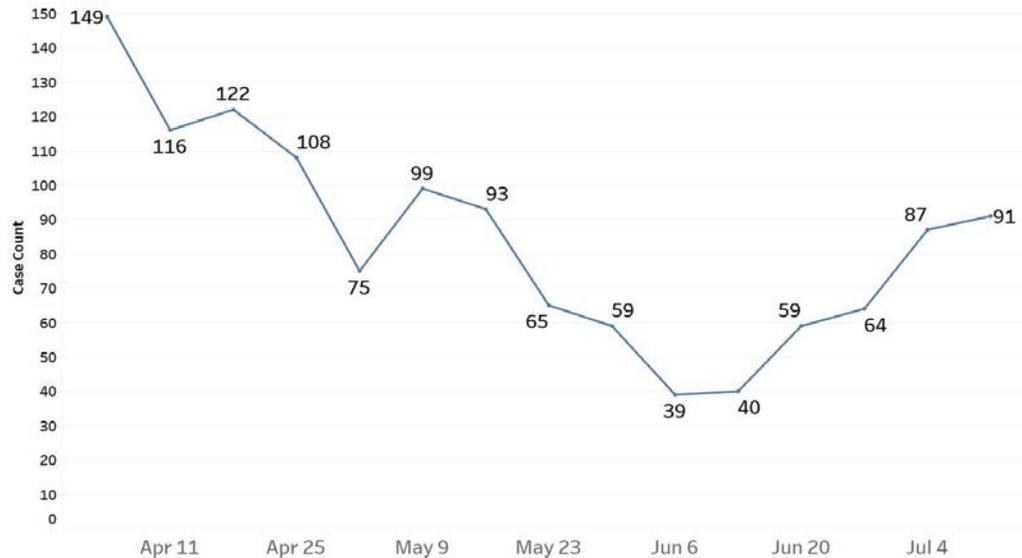
“All of our residents play a crucial role in stopping the disease. Right now, vaccines are still highly effective against the variants but viruses can mutate to stay alive. With every new mutation/variant created we run the risk of this virus becoming resistant to vaccines,” said Logan Hudson, SCPHD public health division administrator. “The only way to stop variants from forming is to stop the virus from spreading. If you haven’t been vaccinated yet, I urge you to get your vaccine as soon as possible.”

SCPHD is also seeing a spike in COVID-19 cases reported in this region over the last few weeks. Case rates began dropping in mid-January, as vaccination rates climbed. That decline continued until mid-June, when the trend reversed and south central Idaho began to see a steady increase in cases.

*Select the “Nowcast” option while reviewing the CDC data set to see the latest variant data.

94 percent of cases reported in this region since June have been in residents without a COVID-19 vaccine. In a recent data [review](#), Idaho Health and Welfare (IDHW) found 98.7 percent of COVID-19 related hospitalizations in the state were in residents who had no record of being vaccinated.

COVID-19 cases organized by week



“Our current rates mimic the trends we saw last summer. A small surge in cases in the middle of summer, and then a huge surge in the fall,” said Maxwell. “We can still prevent that massive fall surge if enough residents receive their vaccine now. Time is running out to get our communities fully vaccinated before people begin gathering indoors again.”

Along with vaccination, residents can take simple steps to protect themselves from the spread of disease:

- Wear a mask in public if you have not been vaccinated
- Wash your hands often and avoid touching your face
- Stay home when sick except to seek medical attention
- Maintain space between yourself and others you don't live with
- Avoid large gatherings

Schedule a vaccine appointment or check for walk-in clinics in your area here:

<https://www.phd5.idaho.gov/Covid-vaccine/>.

SCPHD is running two COVID-19 informational hotlines, one in English at (208) 737-1138, and one in Spanish at (208) 737-5965. Or, you may email questions to scphd@phd5.idaho.gov.

*Select the “Nowcast” option while reviewing the CDC data set to see the latest variant data.