



AMERICAN  
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## ACHA COVID-19 Update: February 17, 2021

*These updates have been provided by ACHA's COVID-19 Task Force. Please forward this message to others on campus who may benefit. Non-members can subscribe to receive these and other messages [here](#). We will continue to update the [COVID-19 webpage](#) with important alerts and resources.*

### ACHA Updates

#### **CE Credit Available for Addressing COVID-19 Mitigation at Rural, Small, and Medium Sized Institutions: Solutions from the Field**

Friday, February 26, at 3:00 pm ET

**Just announced: CME and CHES/MCHES credit is available for this webinar!** Join our presenters as they discuss the unique challenges to implementing campus mitigation efforts at rural, small, and medium sized colleges and universities. Each presenter will discuss the obstacles the pandemic has posed on their campuses and the innovative ways they overcame these challenges.

[Register here.](#)

#### **Submit Your Program or Policy for Inclusion in ACHA's Compendium of Behavioral Change Approaches to Reduce the Spread of SARS-CoV-2**

ACHA, in partnership with CDC, developed a document to provide examples of [behavioral change approaches](#) implemented by colleges and universities to promote everyday strategies that reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

ACHA is working to turn the existing document into a searchable online directory and is asking for IHEs to submit their programs and policies for inclusion in the directory. Tell us about the approaches that your campus has been successful in using to reduce transmission by filling out [this form](#).

### CDC Updates

#### **CDC Science Agenda for COVID-19**

CDC updated its [science agenda](#) which serves as a "high-level framework for the planning and prioritization of COVID-19 work conducted or supported by CDC" and is organized around six priority areas, each with accompanying objectives:

- COVID-19 disease detection, burden, and impact
- Transmission of SARS-CoV-2
- Natural history of SARS-CoV-2 infection
- Protection in healthcare and non-healthcare work settings
- Prevention, mitigation, and intervention strategies
- Social, behavioral and communication science

## Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the U.S.

CDC has provided [new guidance](#) on mRNA vaccines. The Immunization Action Coalition provides the following [highlights](#) of changes to the Clinical Considerations web page:

- New recommendations for preventing, reporting, and managing mRNA COVID-19 vaccine administration errors (Appendix A)
- Clarification on contraindications and precautions
  - Contraindication: Persons with a known (diagnosed) allergy to PEG, another mRNA vaccine component, or polysorbate, have a [contraindication](#) to vaccination
  - Precaution: Persons with a reaction to a vaccine or injectable therapy that contains multiple components, one of which is PEG, another mRNA vaccine component or polysorbate, but in whom it is unknown which component elicited the immediate allergic reaction have a [precaution](#) to vaccination
- Updated information on delayed, injection-site reactions after the first mRNA vaccine dose: these reactions are neither a contraindication nor precaution to the second dose
- Updated quarantine recommendations for vaccinated persons. Fully vaccinated persons who meet criteria no longer are required to quarantine following an exposure to someone with COVID-19. Additional considerations for patients and residents in healthcare settings are provided.
- Additional information and updated recommendations for testing for tuberculosis infection; TB testing may be done before or at the same time as mRNA COVID-19 vaccination or should be delayed for ≥4 weeks after the completion of mRNA COVID-19 vaccination

## Updated Guidance on Transport of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

CDC updated the COVID-19 Vaccine Addendum (pages 49–62) of its [Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit](#) to include vaccine-specific reference sheets summarizing storage and handling guidance for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. CDC also updated guidance on transport of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. Read the Immunization Action Coalition's [summary](#) of the update.

## Prevention and Treatment

### Maximizing Fit for Cloth and Medical Procedure Masks to Improve Performance

This [CDC MMWR](#) not only advocates universal masking to slow the spread of COVID-19, but it also recommends improving the fit and seal of masks by placing a cloth mask over a medical procedure mask (double masking) or knotting the ear loops of a medical procedure mask and then tucking in and flattening the extra material close to the face (knotting and tucking). The MMWR also recounts two recent studies which demonstrated mask fitters or placing sheer nylon hosiery material over the mask will significantly improve fit and reduce edge gaps.

### Improve How Your Mask Protects You

CDC also updated its [mask guidance](#) with recommendations that improve fit and seal:

- Choose a mask with a nose wire
- Use a mask fitter or brace
- Check for a snug fit: check for gaps by cupping your hands around the outside edges of the mask, no air should flow from the sides or near your eyes, if the mask is a good fit, you will feel warm air come through the front of the mask and may be able to see the mask material move in and out with each breath
- Double mask

This short [YouTube video](#) demonstrates the knotting and tucking technique to improve the fit and seal of the medical procedure mask.

## Testing and Tracking/Tracing

### **Adoption and Implementation of Campus COVID-19 Testing Strategies: Webinar**

February 22, 2021, 1:00 PM–3:00 PM EST

What new resources are available to implement testing programs in higher education? How are testing programs helping campuses operate during the pandemic? Join the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine for [this webinar](#) on February 22nd to explore key lessons learned, see how those lessons have been used for the spring 2021 semester, and share additional available resources that can help increase the implementation of successful testing programs on campuses. This discussion will extend beyond the scientific and technical aspects of testing to encompass how testing decisions and broader uptake of successful testing programs intersect with overall decisions about how to operate safely in the pandemic and manage the pandemic in campus communities.

This webinar is a follow up to the rapid expert consultation [COVID-19 Testing Strategies for Colleges and Universities](#), which presents 10 key lessons learned about campus COVID-19 testing programs during the fall 2020 semester.

## Vaccines

### **Interim Recommendations for Use of the AZD 1222 Vaccine Against COVID-19 Developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca**

WHO released the [interim guidance](#) for the AstraZeneca vaccine known as AZD 1222. The vaccine has an efficacy of 63% and efficacy increases the longer the dosing interval. The recommended schedule is two doses (0.5 ml) 4-12 weeks apart. However, because of the increased efficacy and immunogenicity with a longer interdose interval, WHO is recommending the second dose to be given 8-12 weeks after the first. There are 10 doses in each vial. The recommendations address special populations, the variants, communications, community engagement, and storage.

### **Op-ed: Why States Should Give the J&J Vaccine to Young Adults First**

In this [Chicago Tribune op-ed](#), Cornell University President Jonathan Brand advocates for the 53 million young adults (18–29-year-olds) in the U.S. to be first in line to receive the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Johnson & Johnson expects to produce 100 million doses by June.

### **Strategies for Building Confidence in the COVID-19 Vaccines**

This National Academy of Sciences [rapid expert consultation publication](#) provides strategies for engaging and communicating with communities and stakeholders to build public confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines, especially communities at higher risk of contracting and dying from the disease.

## College Campuses

### **Penn State University Offers COVID-19 Class to Teach Students and Spread Pandemic Safety Information**

Penn State University is one of the first schools in the nation to offer a credit-bearing [COVID-19 class](#). The inaugural class has only 6 students, but the three co-instructors and co-authors of the book *Skills to Obstruct*

*Pandemics: How to protect yourself and your community from COVID-19 and similar infections* hope to offer the course online in future semesters. They have offered the online tutorial for free at [stopthespread.health](https://stopthespread.health).

### **Spring Break's New Look: Older and Socially Distant**

This [New York Times article](#) describes what spring break may look like this year as many colleges cancelled the traditional spring break week and replaced it with single days off scattered throughout the semester.

### **Some Campuses Have Already Eclipsed their Fall COVID-19 Case Totals. What's Going On?**

This Chronicle of Higher Ed [article](#) discusses the early increases in confirmed COVID-19 cases on several campuses. Some of those numbers are due to holiday travel, higher rates of viral transmission nationwide, pandemic fatigue, complacency, and variants.

## **Mental Health**

### **NCAA Student-Athlete Well-Being Survey Fall 2020**

This [fall 2020 study](#) examined the impact of the pandemic on student athlete physical and mental well-being in the previous semester. A follow-up study to one conducted in spring 2020, the fall study included 25,000 student-athletes, representing all conferences across divisions. Student-athletes continued to report elevated rates of feeling overwhelmed and exhausted but lower levels of loneliness, loss, anger, and sadness and fewer sleep difficulties in fall 2020. However, mental health concerns remained highest among women, student-athletes of color, those on the queer spectrum, those living alone or away from campus, and those attending classes virtually. Mental health concerns were driven by academic worries, COVID-19-related health concerns, lack of access to sport, and financial worries. Since the start of the fall term, 37% reported having to isolate or quarantine and nearly two-thirds reported almost always following social distancing guidelines, including masking.

### **What's the Point? Young People's Despair Deepens as COVID-19 Crisis Drags On**

This [New York Times article](#) describes the "mental health pandemic" affecting young people throughout the world due to isolation because of the lockdowns: "Last in line for vaccines and with schools and universities shuttered, young people have borne much of the burden of the sacrifices being made largely to protect older people, who are more at risk from severe infections." With the onset of winter, young people are manifesting more severe symptoms of anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and addictions. They have lost traditional milestones, job opportunities, and opportunities to develop peer relationships. The piece ends with some solutions, including providing accessible information on how to seek help, encouraging people to go outside as much as possible, increasing government investments in mental health, and reopening schools and universities.

## **Health Disparities**

### **How the Winter Surge Changed COVID Disparities**

The two graphs in this [Axios article](#) provide a visual snapshot of racial disparities in COVID-19 deaths and how the disparities narrowed since the fall/winter surge. However, the second chart on death rates by race/ethnicity adjusts for age, demonstrating that Americans of color are dying at younger ages and still have a significantly higher death rate than white Americans.

See all updates here: [https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Topics/COVID-19\\_Update.aspx](https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Topics/COVID-19_Update.aspx)

ACHA COVID-19 Page: <https://www.acha.org/COVID-19>



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8455 Colesville Road, Suite 740, Silver Spring, MD 20910 | TEL 410-859-1500 | [contact@acha.org](mailto:contact@acha.org) | [www.acha.org](http://www.acha.org)