

Five back-to-school COVID-19 safety tips

A checklist to help everyone stay safe as kids head back to the classroom, and to make the most of our opportunity for in-person learning this school year

- 1. Make a plan to vaccinate all eligible household members.** Vaccination is the most effective tool we have to stay safe from COVID-19. Vaccination will also help keep our kids in school. Vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine unless they have symptoms. Household members who are 12 or older can receive a free COVID-19 vaccine, and appointments and walk-in clinics are available daily across the state. As school starts, help protect your child and their classmates, including those too young to get vaccinated, by making sure to vaccinate all eligible household members.
- 2. Wear face coverings or masks in public and in carpools.** Face coverings are effective at preventing the spread of COVID-19 and can reduce the need to be quarantined and miss in-person learning. Oregon currently requires face coverings for everyone five years of age or older in all public indoor spaces, and in crowded public outdoor spaces where it's difficult to maintain six feet of physical distance. With the Delta variant circulating in our communities, it's smart to also mask up in private when you're with people from different households. And, if you and your child participate in carpools with other families, it's safest for all to wear face coverings and roll the windows down for good air circulation.
- 3. Limit gatherings with other households— including big events for kids, like birthday parties.** If your kids have an early fall birthday, celebrate with just your household. You might consider postponing larger celebrations until the Delta variant's rapid spread has subsided (plan a half birthday bash!). If you do hold a gathering with multiple households, keep it outdoors and wear face coverings if physical distancing is difficult.
- 4. Move social activities outdoors.** To help minimize kids' exposure to COVID-19, try to plan outdoor activities when possible — especially when with other households. This can include outdoor play dates, small social get togethers, hikes, trips to the park and sports. Remember to wear face coverings when you can't stay at least six feet apart from people who aren't in your household.
- 5. Make a plan in case your child needs to miss school.** This fall, we are returning to full-time, in-person school. For students, families and school staff, this may bring about feelings of excitement, opportunity, anticipation, uncertainty, and nervousness. To keep everyone as safe as possible throughout the year, groups of students may be required to miss in-person school days if they are exposed to someone with COVID-19. Reach out to your school to understand more about their plans when students need to miss school. The Oregon Department of Education has also developed a [resource for families to plan](#) the supports you or your child might need should your child need to miss school. Being prepared can make this difficult time easier, and will help your child transition to and from the classroom.

Don't forget — [resources are available](#) to understand what schools are doing to protect students and their households from COVID-19. Always feel free to communicate directly with your child's teacher about your needs.

Document accessibility: For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the Health Information Center at 1-971-673-2411, 711 TTY or COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsosha.state.or.us.