

Tracking COVID Cases in Cuyahoga County, The Delta Variant, Vaccines for Those Who Have Had COVID? Dr. Michael's COVID-19 Update for June 12, 2021.

For the last month, I've been tracking new COVID cases in Cuyahoga County. I've been using the data from the [Cuyahoga Board of Health's website](#) to calculate the previous 7-day average from Friday to Thursday.¹ I would base my numbers on the data the county posted each Friday evening.

The cases in the county have declined drastically with an average 25% reduction each week. The reduction was even more significant this past week with an incredible 40% reduction over last week. I would also post case numbers for the week, and tonight I realized that the data that was posted was based on cases in Cuyahoga county *minus the city of Cleveland*. The good news is that my calculation of a 7-day daily average for last week was 36.4 cases per day (minus the city of Cleveland) is not far from this week's 7-day daily average of 39.0 *including Cleveland*.

Please realize that this is based on preliminary data, and these numbers will go up as reported cases get entered into the state's system. My goal is to get a consistent, up to date, picture of trends rather than accurate numbers.

Starting this week, I am tracking numbers that are reported from Thursday of the previous week to the Wednesday of the current week. I am using the most current data available from the [Ohio Department of Health's website](#).²

No matter how you look at it, cases are dropping, we will get a better idea at the end of this week of how easing restrictions affect our numbers. Out of an abundance of caution, we will continue our COVID protocols for the next week. If we get a decline of at least 15% this week, we will begin to relax our protocols. However, we will still maintain social distancing, hand washing, and mask-wearing for the foreseeable future. Changes to our protocols will focus on using the waiting room again, allowing clients to pass in the hall, keeping the door unlocked, and stop wiping down infrequently used surfaces (like supplement bottles after testing).

In other COVID news, the Delta (B.1.617.2.) variant, which is [devastating India](#),³ now has a foothold in the United States. It is now the [dominant variant in the UK](#). (We are switching to Greek nomenclature for [naming variants of concern](#)⁴). A preliminary study shows that the Pfizer vaccine is only 33% effective against this variant after the first dose. Fortunately, two weeks after the second dose, effectiveness rises to 88%.⁵ Health [officials are concerned](#) that

¹ "Coronavirus - CCBH." <https://www.ccbh.net/covid-19-information-and-resources/>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

² "Overview | COVID-19 - Ohio COVID - Ohio" <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/dashboards>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

³ "My dream was buried": the children of India orphaned by Covid" 11 Jun. 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/11/my-dream-was-buried-the-children-of-india-orphaned-by-covid>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

⁴ "WHO names Covid-19 variants found in India as 'Kappa' and 'Delta" 1 Jun. 2021, https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/who-names-covid-19-variants-found-in-india-as-kappa-and-delta-121060100020_1.html. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

⁵ "Delta Variant and COVID-19 Vaccines: What to Know - WebMD." 10 Jun. 2021, https://www.webmd.com/vaccines/covid-19-vaccine/news/20210610/delta-variant-and-covid-19-vaccines-what-to-know?c=RSS_PUBLIC. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

this variant will wreak havoc among the undervaccinated and the unvaccinated.⁶ This variant seems to be 60% more contagious than the Alpha (B.1.1.7 or UK variant). It is also more virulent with twice as many people infected with the [Delta variant winding up in the hospital](#).⁷

Currently, the Alpha (B.1.1.7 or UK variant) is still the dominant variant in the United States. While it is less virulent than the Delta variant, it is still a variant of concern and is more [deadly than the original COVID-19 virus](#).⁸

While most vaccinated people are significantly protected against these variants, immunocompromised individuals who are fully vaccinated are not [getting the same protection](#), and are still significantly vulnerable to the virus.⁹

In my [original article](#) on the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines, I stated that I would get an [antibody test](#) to see if I had unknowingly been exposed to the virus.^{10,11} My rationale at the time was that the goal of the vaccines was to create antibodies to immunize against infection and that if I already had antibodies, it would significantly impact my decision whether to get vaccinated. (As it turned out, I didn't have any antibodies and chose to get vaccinated.) A preliminary study from the Cleveland Clinic shows that people who were previously infected had about the same immunity as [those that were vaccinated](#).¹² This study followed healthcare workers over 5 months. This coincides with a previous World Health Organization (WHO) report that showed "robust immunity at 6 months post-infection in [95% of subjects under study](#)," and a report from the National Institute of Health stating "The immune systems of more than 95% of people who recovered from COVID-19 had durable memories of the virus up to [eight months after infection](#)."¹³ Other research is showing that even after blood antibodies have dissipated, immunity is still present. Blood antibodies are only one part of a complicated immune response against infection and it is normal for them to [dissipate with time](#).¹⁴ In fact, memory B-cells, found in bone marrow, will remember the virus and produce antibodies as needed leading to possible [years of immunity against the COVID-19 virus](#).¹⁵

If you have had a documented case of COVID-19 more than 8 months ago and are deciding on vaccination, I recommend that you get an antibody test to see if you still have any antibodies in your blood. You can get [one](#)

⁶ "Covid: Doctor warns Southern states vulnerable to Delta variant this" 11 Jun. 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/11/covid-doctor-warns-southern-states-vulnerable-to-delta-variant-this-summer.html>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

⁷ "Covid: Unvaccinated most at risk from Delta variant - BBC News." 11 Jun. 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-57441677>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

⁸ "Coronavirus: What is the alpha variant? Why is it so ... - Deseret News." 9 Jun. 2021, <https://www.deseret.com/coronavirus/2021/6/9/22524080/covid-alpha-variant-reasons>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

⁹ "'It's Kind of a Catch-22': Immunosuppression and COVID-19" 23 Mar. 2021, <https://www.medpagetoday.com/opinion/marty-makary/91775>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

¹⁰ "Covid-19 Vaccine Safety Resources. - Advanced Spinal Care Center." 31 Dec. 2020, <http://spinalalignment.com/covid-19-vaccine-safety-resources/>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

¹¹ "COVID-19 Antibody Testing | Labcorp." <https://www.labcorp.com/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/individuals/antibody-test>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

¹² "Necessity of COVID-19 vaccination in previously infected individuals" 5 Jun. 2021, <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.06.01.21258176v2>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

¹³ "Lasting immunity found after recovery from COVID-19 | National" 26 Jan. 2021, <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/lasting-immunity-found-after-recovery-covid-19>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

¹⁴ "Why You Shouldn't Worry About Studies Showing Waning" 17 Feb. 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/27/health/coronavirus-antibodies-studies.html>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

¹⁵ "Immunity to the Coronavirus May Persist for Years, Scientists Find" 26 May. 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/26/health/coronavirus-immunity-vaccines.html>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

[here](#).¹⁶ Mine cost only \$10 after insurance and in the unlikely event that your insurance doesn't pay for it or if you don't have health insurance, the full cost is under \$55. If you decide to get vaccinated, you may want to talk to your medical doctor to see if only one dose (as a booster) would be sufficient as [recent studies suggest](#).¹⁷

What this means for the rest of us: To get herd immunity, we don't need to get 70-80% of the population vaccinated. We need to get to 70-80% of the population to have antibodies--be it artificially or naturally made.

For those of you that are deciding not to get vaccinated, and have not had a documented COVID infection, I recommend that you also get an antibody test. If you have antibodies, it will be a relief and you should feel free to ethically follow the CDC guidelines for [vaccinated people](#).¹⁸ If you don't have antibodies, be extra careful. COVID is still [killing over 400 people a day](#) in the US. The new variants are extremely contagious and are hospitalizing a greater percentage of those that get the virus. You may want to reconsider getting vaccinated. [Less than 34 million](#) people have gotten COVID in the US which has killed 600,000 people. There are significantly more of us that have gotten vaccinated.¹⁹ [142 million of us](#) have been fully vaccinated and the side effects and deaths are minuscule compared to those from COVID.²⁰

For those of us that are vaccinated or have had COVID, nothing is 100%. Antibodies seem to afford significant protection against these new variants, but fully vaccinated people are still getting COVID, as are those that have had COVID previously. Enjoy your family and friends, but be smart. Keep a mask handy, keep an eye on the numbers, and remember, good ventilation and the outdoors are key to preventing the spread of this disease.

¹⁶ "COVID-19 Antibody Testing | Labcorp."

<https://www.labcorp.com/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/individuals/antibody-test>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

¹⁷ "Have You Had Covid-19? Study Says You May Need Only One" 2 Feb. 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/01/health/have-you-had-covid-19-coronavirus.html>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

¹⁸ "Op-Ed: Quit Ignoring Natural COVID Immunity | MedPage Today." 28 May. 2021, <https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/covid19/92836>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

¹⁹ "Covid in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count - The New York Times." <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/covid-cases.html>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.

²⁰ "Covid-19 Vaccinations: County and State" <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/covid-19-vaccine-doses.html>. Accessed 12 Jun. 2021.