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## Prison visitation to be allowed again

With vaccination rates rising and COVID-19 cases falling, the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC) will soon be able to allow visitors back into its facilities.

The DOC is planning a phased-in reopening to visitors while continuing to follow CDC guidance for congregate settings.

Attorneys and court officials, embassy and consulate officials, and other official visitors will be able to enter DOC facilities beginning July 15. During the pandemic, as the world moved from in-person meetings to meeting via video platforms

like Zoom, attorneys, family members, and others who needed to meet with Virginia DOC inmates met with them via video as well.

Given current conditions, the DOC plans to open facilities to religious visitors and volunteers as early as August 1, and to open pilot sites for in-person family visitation by Sept. 1. The department anticipates that in-person family visitation will be resumed at all facilities statewide by Oct. 1. Safety is of the utmost importance, and sanitation measures will continue to be followed as visitation restarts, including cleaning between visitors/visitor groups.

Visitors age 12 and over will be required to take a self-administered (or guardian-administered) COVID-19 rapid antigen test and must receive a negative test result in order to visit an inmate or Community Corrections Alternative Program (CCAP) probationer in person. Because correctional facilities are congregate settings, masks are required. Inmates and CCAP probationers who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will be eligible to meet with members of the public in person. Video visits will continue to be available to unvaccinated inmates. The testing process and other visitation requirements will be shared on the DOC website.

Currently, 72% of DOC inmates/CCAP probationers have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and 65% are fully vaccinated. Vaccination percentages are affected as inmates/CCAP probationers are discharged from correctional facilities and no longer counted amongst the vaccinated population and new individuals enter the system.

While prevention efforts at facilities continue to be very successful, the spread of COVID-19 variants and community vaccination rates are considerations that will continue to be monitored. The DOC will continue to follow updates to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Virginia Department of Health (VDH) guidance for correctional facilities/congregate care settings.

The DOC's public health and safety responsibilities extend to the department's probation and parole offices as well as administrative offices. The DOC currently supervises about 66,180 people on community supervision. Precautions will continue to support employees, probationers/parolees, contractors and representatives of government and other partner agencies. Community conditions and consistent screening and testing practices will continue to be essential.

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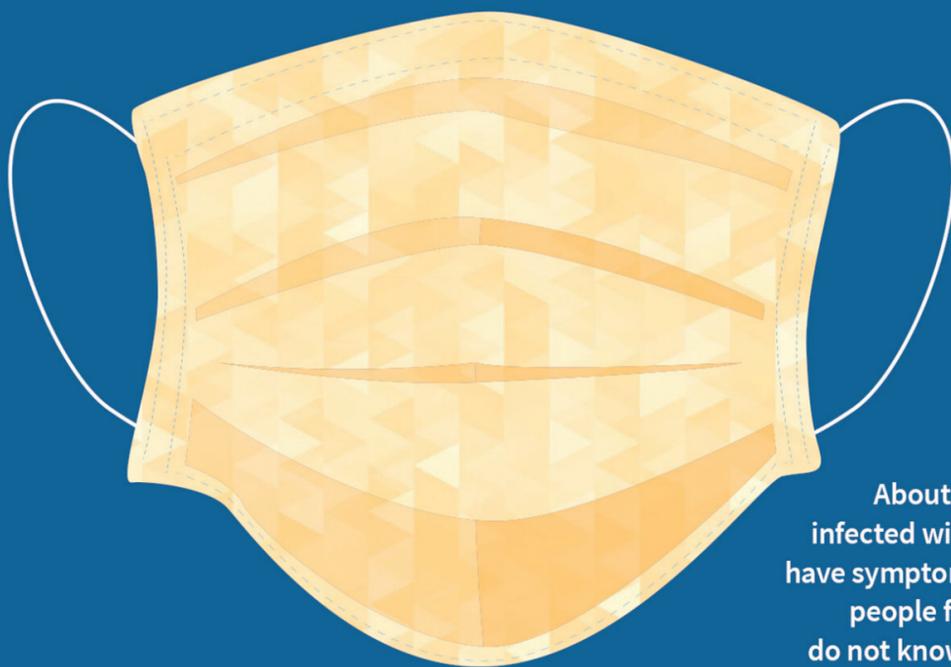
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# IF YOU'RE NOT FULLY VACCINATED, MASK UP AGAINST THE NEW VARIANTS OF COVID-19.



About half of people infected with COVID-19 do not have symptoms. Masking protects people from others who do not know they are infected.

With new variants of the virus here in Virginia, we have to stay committed to stopping the spread. If you are not fully vaccinated, wear a mask with layers, stay 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and go get the free, safe, and effective COVID-19 vaccine.

Visit [Vaccinate.Virginia.gov](https://www.vaccinate.virginia.gov) or learn more by calling **877-VAX-IN-VA**.

**Stop the spread to stop the variants.**

