

April 29, 2022

## Chicago COVID-19 and Travel Advisory Update

CHICAGO – In the CDC’s weekly update of [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) today, 9.7 percent– or 314 – of the 3,220 counties in the U.S. and Puerto Rico are now at “Medium” or “High” COVID-19 levels. That is an increase from 189 counties last week. CDC determines COVID-19 Community Levels by combining the number of new local COVID-19 cases, COVID-19 hospital admissions, and COVID-19 hospital capacity in the prior week. Over 90 percent of U.S. counties remain at a “Low” COVID-19 level. The Northeast and New England continue to have the largest cluster of Medium to High-level counties, in an area that spans from western New York to northern Maine.

Cook County, including the city of Chicago, remains at a “Low” COVID-19 level this week, according to the CDC. Five counties in Illinois, including DuPage, Lake, Champaign, Mclean and Mason are now at a “Medium” COVID-19 level. Other parts of the country with clusters of “Medium” include the southeast corner of Minnesota, northern Michigan, and an area in southern Wisconsin around Madison.

With COVID-19 cases continuing to rise gradually in both suburban Cook County and the city of Chicago, Chicago/Cook County may move into the “Medium” COVID-19 community level in the next one to two weeks. This would happen if cases rose above 200 per 100,000 population over 7 days (currently at 190). However even with this continued gradual rise in cases, Chicago’s COVID-19 hospitalizations (and deaths) remain at or near all-time pandemic lows.

To reach a “High” COVID-19 community level, *both* cases and hospitalizations need to be elevated--meaning that there is no risk of reaching a “High” COVID-19 community level in Chicago or Cook County in the short-term. In Chicago, mask mandates, for example, would likely be reinstated at a “High” COVID-19 community level. If we see a significant strain threatening our healthcare system during a COVID-19 surge, actions like mask mandates help alleviate strain on our hospitals.

“While Chicago remains at a low COVID-19 level, with the gradual uptick in cases over the past few weeks, I expect we will cross over to ‘Medium’ soon,” said Allison Arwady, MD, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health. “When we do, I view it as a yellow light of caution. We are, thankfully, very far from reaching the ‘High’ COVID-19 level, but people should begin to exercise more caution--especially if they or someone they live with is at high-risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19. As always, I am most worried about unvaccinated people, as they are still at the highest risk. If you are not vaccinated, or you are not up-to-date with your vaccines because you have not received a booster– now is the time to do it.”

At a “Medium” COVID-19 community level, CDPH recommends that individuals wear a mask in indoor places where vaccination status is not known; ensure they and their social

networks are up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters; and continue with other COVID-19 mitigations: get tested if experiencing COVID-like symptoms, continue to follow quarantine and isolation guidelines, and stay home if sick.

CDPH advises travelers to areas across the U.S. that are at a “Medium” or “High” COVID-19 level to take appropriate precautions – especially ensuring you’re fully up-to-date with vaccines and boosters and wearing a mask in indoor spaces for further protection.

### COVID-19 Community Levels in U.S. by County

	<b>Level</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>% Point Change</b>
	High	56 (14 last week)	1.7%	0.5%
	Medium	258 (175 last week)	8.0%	0.9%
	Low	2910 (3035 last week)	90.3%	-1.4%

The Chicago Department of Public Health tracks and reports many COVID-19 metrics daily for City of Chicago residents, while the Cook County Department of Public Health does so for suburban Cook County residents (excluding Chicago). Visit [chi.gov/coviddash](http://chi.gov/coviddash) for the Chicago COVID-19 daily data dashboard. When the CDC updates its COVID-19 Community Levels national map each week (typically on Thursday evenings), both City of Chicago and suburban Cook County daily data are combined into one weekly metric for Cook County. Locally, Chicago will adjust its COVID-19 community level if EITHER the City or the whole of Cook County reach the threshold determined by CDC.