

UW Health: Offers advice for those not yet vaccinated against COVID-19

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MADISON, Wis. – State and federal guidelines recently relaxed masking and other regulations for those who are fully vaccinated, but many aren't yet or can't be vaccinated.

These still vulnerable individuals should continue to adhere to public health measures that have protected them throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Dr. Matt Anderson, senior medical director, primary care, UW Health.

“The authorized COVID-19 vaccines are working extremely well, as evidenced by the loosening of COVID-19 public health restrictions, but we all must be cognizant of the fact that many in our lives are not vaccinated,” he said.

Children 11 years old and younger, people who have compromised immune systems, like those undergoing cancer treatments, some people with underlying

medical conditions and those who simply have chosen not to get a vaccine for personal reasons, are all at risk of contracting the virus that causes a COVID-19 infection.

To protect them, there are a few things to keep in mind, Anderson said:

- Those who have not been fully vaccinated (two weeks after final dose) should wear a mask when in public
- Adhere to all previous guidance for unvaccinated people (maintain social distancing outside your personal household, avoid large public gatherings, stay home as much as possible, quarantine if ill)
- To those vaccinated who have unvaccinated people in their immediate households, consider masking, even though local orders may not require it. For children this can be good modelling behavior

Perhaps the best way to protect those who can't yet be vaccinated, is for those who can, to get their COVID-19 vaccine, Anderson said.

“COVID-19 vaccines are free and accessible at many locations, and all three authorized in the United States have been proven safe and effective with real world data,” he said. “If you want to resume more normal activities and protect those still vulnerable in this pandemic, please get vaccinated.”

UW Health has not changed its masking policy. Everyone at a UW Health facility is required to wear a medical-grade barrier mask and maintain at least six feet of physical distance whenever possible.

Anderson is available for interviews today, and a recorded interview is available.

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