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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Xi stresses prioritizing people's safety, property in flood prevention, control

BEIJING, July 21 (Xinhua) -- Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday demanded that authorities at all levels must give top priority to ensuring people's safety and property, and carefully and strictly implement the flood prevention and disaster relief measures.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks in an important instruction after continuous heavy rainfall hit regions including central China's Henan Province, causing heavy casualties and property losses.

The rainfall has made the flood control situation very severe, causing severe waterlogging in Zhengzhou and other cities, water levels in some rivers exceeding alarm levels, and damages to dams of some reservoirs, Xi said, adding that sections of railways have also been shut down, and some flights have been canceled.

Xi stressed that authorities at all levels must always put people's safety and property first, and take the lead in fighting the floods.

He ordered authorities at all levels to promptly organize flood prevention and disaster relief forces, properly accommodate those affected, strictly prevent secondary disasters, and minimize casualties and property losses.

The People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force must actively assist local authorities in emergency rescue and relief work, said Xi.

He urged the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters and the emergency management, water resources and transport ministries to enhance coordination, locate hidden dangers, and shore up the protection of major infrastructure.

Relevant departments should also improve the system for early warn-



ings and forecasts of rainfall, typhoons, mountain torrents and mudslides, step up efforts on traffic management, and take detailed and practical flood prevention and disaster relief measures, said Xi.

He also stressed the need to take solid measures to assist those affected by the floods, and to strengthen hygiene and disease control so as to ward off epidemics and prevent people from returning to poverty due to disasters.



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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

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We Need To Pass The Infrastructure Bill



In the U.S. Senate, the majority leader Chuck Schumer has set up a test vote for the new infrastructure bill, but Republican leaders are threatening to block that vote unless

negotiators writing the bill can strike a deal. In the last month the White House and Republicans agreed to spend \$579 billion to build roads, bridges,

power, broadband and infrastructure projects. But lawmakers have squabbled over how to pay for it.

We all know that our national infrastructure

is long overdue. Our airports, highways, bridges and water systems are not functioning well.

The Biden administration really needs to pass the bill as soon as possible. Because the midterm elections will be held next year, if the Republicans regain power in Congress,

President Biden will face more challenges and the bill will be even more difficult to pass.

Today even with the pandemic being under control, the new virus is still attacking our community.

We need to all need to be united to fight this evil and our save our country.



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Israel's President Reuven Rivlin between Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid as they pose for a group photo with ministers of the new Israeli government, in Jerusalem REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun



A demonstrator raises an axe towards riot police during anti-government protests, as Colombia commemorates Independence Day, in Bogota. REUTERS/Santiago Mesa



Youth activists, many of whom began their trek in Paradise, California, gather and listen to 17-year-old activist and organizer, Ema Govea (center) before continuing their march across the Golden Gate Bridge to the home of House of Representative Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senator Dianne Feinstein to highlight their demand of the creation of the Civilian Climate



U.S. President Joe Biden arrives to pose with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (not pictured) during the NATO summit at the Alliance's headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, Kenzo Tribouillard/Pool via REUTERS



Debra Pataxo, of the Pataxo tribe, looks on during a protest for land demarcation and against President Jair Bolsonaro's government, in front of the Planalto Palace in Brasilia, Brazil REUTERS/Adriano Machado



A giant American flag, billed as the largest free flying flag in the world by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, flies on Flag Day from the western towers of the George Washington Bridge between New York and New Jersey, in Fort Lee, New Jersey, REUTERS/ Mike Segar

As The Delta Variant Spreads, Is It Time To Mask Up Again?



unvaccinated and vaccinated people alike to wear face coverings in public indoor spaces because of the growing threat posed by the more contagious delta variant. (Robyn Beck/AFP via Getty Images)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

After declining steeply for six months, coronavirus cases are once again on the rise, thanks to the delta variant. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Friday that new cases are up by nearly 70% in just a week. Hospitalizations are up by nearly 36%.

Surges are most pronounced in areas where vaccination rates are low, but there are also increases in places such as Los Angeles and New York City. And health officials are once again urgently pressing unvaccinated Americans to get the shot.

"This is becoming a pandemic of the unvaccinated," said CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky at a briefing Friday. "If you remain unvaccinated, you are at risk."

But if you're already vaccinated, how worried should you be? Are new precautions called for? Here's what to know about the fast-spreading variant and how to stay safe and protect others.

How much more contagious is the delta variant, really?

The Delta variant is very contagious. As has reported, delta appears to be about 225% more transmissible than the original SARS-CoV-2 strains. One recent preprint study from China found that people who are infected with delta have — on average — about 1,000 times more copies of the virus in their respiratory

tracts than those infected with the original strain, and are infectious earlier in the course of their illness.

No matter how you look at it, delta seems to spread faster, explains Helen Chu, associate professor of medicine at the University of Washington.

"You can look at it through modeling, you can look at it through population-level data, and you can look at it simply by putting the virus into the cell and looking at how quickly it infects the next cell," she says. "In all of those measures, it has looked like it's more transmissible."

If I'm vaccinated, can I get sick with delta?

Yes, but don't panic. The vaccines are effective against the delta variant, and though it's still possible to get infected, the vaccines dramatically reduce the risk of serious illness that leads to hospitalization or death. A study from the U.K. found that the Pfizer vaccine is 96% effective against hospitalization from the delta variant after two doses.

Should I go back to wearing a mask in public?

Many health experts say that may be a

smart move, especially when you're going to be indoors with people who may be unvaccinated and unmasked.

"I would," says Chu of the University of Washington. "I haven't stopped masking indoors."

For her, the calculus has to do with having unvaccinated children at home and not wanting to put them at risk. "Everyone makes their own risk assessment," she says. But with delta cases increasing, "it would be prudent to start doing indoor masking again," she says, particularly as we head into fall.



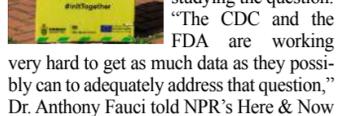
(Mario Tama/Getty Images)

Masking may especially make sense in places with rising rates of infection, says Bill Miller, a physician and epidemiologist at The Ohio State University. It's clear that unvaccinated people are not following the recommended indoor-masking guidelines, he notes. "You go into a grocery store and 95% of the people are unmasked when we haven't come close to that level of vaccination," Miller says. This can put people at risk, including children, and people who are immunocompromised.

It has been nearly two months since the CDC announced new guidelines declaring that fully vaccinated people don't need to wear masks in most settings, but the World Health Organization still encourages people to mask up. And health researcher Ali Mokdad of the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation says he would like the CDC to reinstate a mask mandate nationwide, given the rise in cases. "This is the right and scientific thing to do," he says. "That's the only way we can send a signal to the public in the United States that we're not out of danger and we can encourage people to go and get the vaccine."

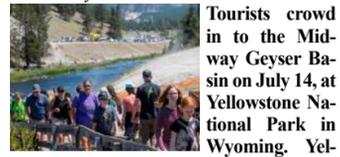
Do I need a booster shot?

At this point, no. So far the federal government doesn't recommend booster shots to enhance immunity, though it is actively studying the question. "The CDC and the FDA are working very hard to get as much data as they possibly can to adequately address that question," Dr. Anthony Fauci told NPR's Here & Now



this week. Federal health officials and vaccine makers continue to follow participants enrolled in the initial clinical trials to see how well immunity holds up with current vaccinations. So far, experts say it's encouraging. "The level of antibodies seem to be holding up pretty well, so we have to watch and see what happens over the course of the coming months," Francis Collins, NIH director, told NPR in an interview.

Eventually, as immunity wanes, a booster could be recommended for certain groups, including elderly people. There's also research underway to test a mix-and-match approach to booster shots. Researchers are giving study participants who were originally vaccinated with any of the three authorized vaccines, a booster shot of the Moderna vaccine. White House COVID-19 response coordinator Jeff Zients said Friday that the administration is ready for the possibility of boosters "if and when the science shows they are needed."



Tourists crowd in to the Midway Geyser Basin on July 14, at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. Yellowstone is one of many national parks seeing record numbers of visitors this summer, even as coronavirus cases are rising in many states. (Natalie Behring/Getty Images)

Does delta cause different COVID-19 symptoms?

Some doctors and public health departments have reported that people infected with delta have different symptoms from the original, classic signs of COVID-19: cough, loss of taste or smell, and fever. Now, some of the more common symptoms appear to be runny nose, sore throat and headache, according to the ZOE COVID Study, an ongoing app-based research project based in the U.K. But Chu warns that it's hard to know what's behind that apparent change, "because the population that it's infecting is not the same population that was infected in the prior waves," says Chu. The people getting sick now tend to be much younger, she says.

Since COVID-19 might present differently in younger people, any changes in symptoms could have less to do with the new variant and more to do with the people who are contracting it. "I don't know that you can disentangle that," Chu says.

"This is already a disease that produces a pretty broad range of different clinical presentations in people," adds Rasmussen. She'd like to see better data before concluding the symptoms are, in fact, different.

Do I need those bleach wipes again?

No extra surface cleaning necessary. Even though it's more transmissible, delta still transmits the same way the original SARS-CoV-2 virus does. "This type of virus, which is an RNA virus that is enveloped, tends to transmit [through] respiratory transmission," Chu says.



That's backed up by "some extremely detailed contact tracing" done in the recent preprint from China, says Rasmussen. The researchers "determined that these cases were transmitted primarily through what they called indirect contact, which is most likely inhalation of infectious aerosols [while] breathing shared air, or through direct physical contact," she says.

That means the primary way the virus spreads remains being indoors with someone who is infected and breathing in their droplets or aerosols. With delta, the difference is that the infected person will make many more copies of the virus, faster, which makes it easier to spread.

But in a way, "that's good news," Rasmussen says. "It means that the mitigation measures that we have put in place previously will still work against the delta variant — it's not being transmitted by some other route."

Should I turn down invitations to weddings and other large gatherings?

Many public health experts say it's safe to attend if you're vaccinated, but keep the variant in mind, especially if you're somewhere with rising cases.



OSU's Bill Miller says he encourages mask wearing for an indoor wedding or event "because you're bringing people together from different social networks, creating a great opportunity for an outbreak."

There's a case study that serves as a reminder that the risk is not zero: Six vaccinated people got COVID-19 after attending a wedding near Houston, held in a large, outdoor tent. All of the infected people got symptoms, one was hospitalized, and another person — who had received India's Covaxin vaccine — died, according to a pre-print case study. As scary as that sounds, "there could be rare events like these where people are in an enclosed tent and very close to each other. But the vast majority, the vast, vast majority of viral transmission is happening indoors," says Chu. (Courtesy npr.org)

CDC Investigating Dallas Monkeypox Case Of Traveler From Nigeria



Outside the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

CNN — The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local health officials in Dallas said Friday they are investigating a case of an unusual virus called monkeypox in a traveler coming from Nigeria. Monkeypox is a relative of smallpox, but it's less transmissible and less deadly. Smallpox was eradicated in 1979 through a global vaccination campaign.

The CDC and health officials in Dallas said although the traveler flew while infected, they don't believe it's likely anyone else on the flight was infected. They're checking just in case, though. Dallas County health authorities are reporting a case of rare monkeypox virus in an individual who traveled from Nigeria to Dallas. The person is hospitalized and in stable condition, according to a statement Friday from the Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working with Delta Air Lines and state and local health officials to contact airline passengers and others who may have been in contact with the patient during two flights: from Lagos, Nigeria, to Atlanta on July 8, with arrival July 9; and Atlanta to Dallas Love Field Airport on July 9. Public health authorities said they have identified and are in contact with individuals who were in direct contact with the patient.

Travelers were required to wear masks on the flights as well as in the U.S. airports because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

"Therefore, it's believed the risk of spread of monkeypox via respiratory droplets to others on the planes and in the airports is low," the Dallas County statement said.

Monkeypox is a rare but potentially serious viral illness that typically begins with flu-like symp-

ptoms and swelling of the lymph nodes, progressing to a widespread rash on the face and body. Most infections last two to four weeks. Monkeypox is in the same family of viruses as smallpox but causes a milder infection.

In this case, CDC laboratory testing showed the patient is infected with a strain of monkeypox most commonly seen in parts of West Africa, including Nigeria. Infections with this strain are fatal in about 1 in 100 people, according to a CDC statement. However, rates can be higher in people with weakened immune systems. There is no proven safe treatment for monkeypox virus infection.

"The individual is a City of Dallas resident who traveled from Nigeria to Dallas, arriving at Love Field airport on July 9, 2021. The person is hospitalized in Dallas and is in stable condition," the Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services said in a statement.

"We have been working closely with the CDC and DSHS (the Texas Department of State Health Services) and have conducted interviews with the patient and close contacts that were exposed," said DCHHS Director Dr. Philip Huang. "We have determined that there is very little risk to the general public."

The CDC said it was working to contact airline passengers and others who may have been in contact with the patient during two flights:

Lagos, Nigeria, to Atlanta on July 8, with arrival on July 9; and Atlanta to Dallas on July 9. "Travelers on these flights were required to wear masks as well as in the U.S. airports due

to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it's believed the risk of spread of monkeypox via respiratory droplets to others on the planes and in the airports is low. Working with airline and state and local health partners, CDC is assessing potential risks to those who may have had close contact with the traveler on the plane and specific settings," the CDC said.

Rodents, including animals kept as pets, can carry monkeypox and transmit it to people. In 2003, 47 people in the US were infected with the virus. The outbreak was traced to a shipment of small mammals from Ghana that were sold as pets.

There was a smaller outbreak in Britain in 2018. "Monkeypox begins with fever, headache, muscle aches, and exhaustion. The main difference between symptoms of smallpox and monkeypox is that monkeypox causes lymph nodes to swell while smallpox does not," the CDC said. Like smallpox, monkeypox causes skin blisters that eventually scab over.



A teenage boy in the village of Manfoute, Congo Republic, was examined by doctors in August 2017 because he was suspected of having monkeypox. (Melina Mara/The Washington Post)

"The illness typically lasts for 2-4 weeks. In Africa, monkeypox has been shown to cause death in as many as 1 in 10 persons who contract the disease," the CDC said.

The strain involved in this week's case is much less deadly, killing perhaps 1 in 100 people, the CDC said. The smallpox vaccine can protect people from monkeypox, but the global vaccination campaign ended when that virus was eradicated, so access to the vaccine is limited. A drug called cidofovir can treat monkeypox infection, the CDC says. (Courtesy cnn.com)

Related
Texas patient becomes U.S.' first monkeypox case since 2003

A Dallas, Texas, resident who recently returned from Nigeria has tested positive for monkeypox, a rare virus similar to smallpox, local officials said Friday. Though this is the first confirmed case of the virus in the U.S. since 2003, officials said the public should not be concerned.

"While rare, this case is not a reason for alarm and we do not expect any threat to the general public," Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins said in a statement from Dallas County's health department. Because passengers were wear-

ing masks on the flight and in the airport, the health department said, "It's believed the risk of spread of monkeypox via respiratory droplets to others on the planes and in the airports is low."

Monkeypox, which is in the same family of viruses as smallpox, is a rare but potentially deadly viral infection that begins with flu-like symptoms and progresses to a rash on the face and body, according to the CDC. It tends to last two to four weeks. People who do not have symptoms are not capable of transmitting the virus, the health department said. Laboratory testing confirmed the patient is infected with a strain of the virus that is mainly seen in West Africa, which includes Nigeria. Monkeypox infections of that strain are fatal in about 1 in 100 people, affecting those with weakened immune systems more strongly, according to the CDC.

Prior to this case, there have been six other cases of monkeypox in travelers returning from Nigeria. The CDC said this case is not believed to be related to any of the prior cases.

This is the first reported case of monkeypox in Dallas County, according to the health department's statement. The person is currently in isolation at a hospital in Dallas and is in stable condition. The CDC said it is working with local health officials to contact airline passengers and others who were in contact with the infected traveler during their flights from Lagos, Nigeria, to Atlanta on July 8, and Atlanta to Dallas on July 9.

The last time monkeypox was seen in the U.S. was in 2003. Nearly 50 people fell ill after imported African rodents infected prairie dogs, which subsequently infected humans, the CDC said. This launched a government search across 15 states for infected prairie dogs.

Despite past incidences of the virus, Dallas County Health and Human Services Director Dr. Phillip Huang said there's no reason to worry. "We have determined that there is very little risk to the general public," he said in the health department's statement. "This is another demonstration of the importance of maintaining a strong public health infrastructure, as we are only a plane ride away from any global infectious disease."

The patient is hospitalized in isolation in Dallas and is in stable condition, health officials with the Dallas County Health and Human Services said.

"This case is not a reason for alarm and we do not expect any threat to the general public," Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins said in a press release.

The illness, caused by the monkeypox virus, has not been detected in the U.S. since a 2003 outbreak, which involved 47 people. That outbreak was traced to pet prairie dogs in the Mid-

west that harbored the virus.

But monkeypox can also spread from person to person through respiratory droplets or other bodily fluids.

One reason the risk of spread may be low in this case is that the patient — as well as fellow airline passengers — had been required to wear masks while flying because of the pandemic, officials said in the statement.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is helping to contact the patient's fellow passengers and assessing their potential risks.

"This is another demonstration of the importance of maintaining a strong public health infrastructure, as we are only a plane ride away from any global infectious disease," Dr. Philip Huang, director of the Dallas County Health and Human Services, said in a press release.

Monkeypox is related to smallpox, which was eradicated worldwide in 1980, thanks to the smallpox vaccine. Both illnesses cause a distinctive rash that lasts for about a month. Smallpox had a higher fatality rate than monkeypox. It usually takes seven to 14 days after a person is exposed to the monkeypox virus to develop symptoms, according to the CDC, which begin like many other viruses: fatigue, fever, headache, muscle aches.

Within a week of symptom onset, an infected person develops a bumpy, raised rash that often spreads to the entire body. The person is considered contagious until those raised bumps have scabbed over and fallen off.

Most patients recover within a month. In rare cases, the virus can be fatal. No one in the 2003 outbreak in the U.S. died.



The virus got its name because it was first found in laboratory monkeys in the late 1950s. It wasn't until 1970 that it was detected in humans in Congo. Cases have almost exclusively been contained to remote areas of Central and West Africa.

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for monkeypox, the CDC says, though the smallpox vaccine was used in 2003 to help contain the outbreak. (Courtesy https://www.nbcnews.com/ and https://www.cbsnews.com/)