

# FAQs from the Huntington Beach Virtual COVID-19 Town Hall

## January 6, 2021

### ***What's the main method of COVID-19 transmission in Orange County?***

Right now in Orange County, over a seven day period, 67 people out of 100,000 people are infected with COVID-19. The numbers are larger over a four day period – 100 out of 100,000 people. COVID is moving rapidly through our community by individuals engaging in 'high risk' activities such as traveling, visiting bars/restaurants, attending large gatherings, and mingling with people outside their own household.

### ***How can I protect myself from aerosol transmission?***

"Aerosol" has been used in various ways to describe small particles that can move through the air. By wearing a mask, you are less likely to get COVID-19 or transmit it to someone else.

### ***Didn't the concept of "herd immunity" originate based on the assumption of vaccination—as opposed to endemic disease?***

Herd immunity occurs when enough people become immune to a disease to make its spread less likely. As a result, the entire community is protected, even those who are not themselves immune. Herd immunity is usually achieved through vaccination, but it can also occur through natural infection. Without a COVID-19 vaccine, it would take till roughly 2025 to reach herd immunity. With a vaccine we will be able to reach herd immunity much faster.

### ***It seems that minority communities are dying at a higher rate than others from COVID. Why?***

Minority communities are dying at higher rates, primarily due to limited access to medical intervention – NOT their DNA or genetics as an ethnic group. In addition, many of these individuals tend to be central workers who do not have the ability to work safely at home. Many times access to health care is limited. And many times, their ability to socially distance is challenging as multigenerational families live together in close proximity and spread the disease faster.

### ***Do paramedics who interact with potential patients with coronavirus get tested for the virus, and what happens if a paramedic tests positive?***

Huntington Beach paramedics wear a tremendous amount of PPE – N95 masks, eye protection, gowns and gloves. We have established a rigorous safety protocol system if they feel they have been exposed to COVID-19. They are giving a rapid test, required to quarantine for five days, and given another test after several days. When their test comes back negative, they can return to work.

### ***Have you needed to issue directives to paramedics to not transport patients that are deemed unlikely to survive?***

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In Huntington Beach, we have not had to issue directives to our paramedics to not transport patients. Our protocol is to treat the patient at the scene for 20 minutes, and then consult with a physician to see if they need to be brought to the hospital.

### ***Do you think it's safe for kids to go back to in person learning?***

This is a personal matter, as everyone's circumstances and need to return to in person learning vary widely. Kids do indeed get COVID-19, although many may not experience severe symptoms. Regardless, the public health rules for children remain the same if they attend school in person: maintain social distance, limit kids in the classroom, wash hands, and wear a mask.

### ***When will teachers be eligible to get the vaccine?***

As of now, the vaccine is being given to the top tier - health care professionals, front line staff, along with long-term care residents, nursing home facilities. Teachers are included in the next phase which should roll out sometime in February. The City is working closely with the County to roll out an operational plan in Orange County to have everyone vaccinated by July 4<sup>th</sup> – called "Operation Independence." Look for more information within the coming for more details on who will get vaccinated, when and where.

### ***What percentage of COVID positive people are asymptomatic? And do those that might be asymptomatic develop antibodies?***

Latest CDC numbers indicate that more than 40 percent are asymptomatic carriers that show no symptoms.

### ***I think many more patients pass through an asymptomatic infectious phase before developing symptoms. Correct?***

Yes. Assume everyone has COVID.

### ***From what I have heard, many COVID-19 patients develop antibodies, but we do not know how long the antibodies last for or are made.***

Antibody tests check your blood by looking for antibodies, which may tell you if you had a past infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. Antibodies are proteins that help fight off infections and can provide protection against getting that disease again (immunity). Antibodies are disease specific. For example, measles antibodies will protect you from getting measles if you are exposed to it again, but they won't protect you from getting mumps if you are exposed to mumps.

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Antibody tests should not be used to diagnose a current COVID-19 infection, except in instances in which viral testing is delayed. An antibody test may not show if you have a current COVID-19 infection because it can take one to three weeks after infection for your body to make antibodies.

The CDC currently recommends people who had COVID-19 before should still receive the vaccine, and wear a mask after being vaccinated until you hear otherwise from health officials.

### ***Does the vaccine contain penicillin?***

The vaccine does not contain penicillin or other antibiotics.

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