May 17, 2022

Dear Families,

Due to recent increases in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in New York City, **the city is now at a COVID-19 high (orange) alert level**. This means there is significant spread of COVID-19 in the city.

We urge you to take the following proven precautions to protect your family and our communities:

- **Wear a mask**. We recommend that everyone age 2 and older wear a well-fitting mask in all public indoor settings, including at school and early childhood education (ECE) programs, even if not required. Encourage your child to wear a mask while at school or ECE program and when gathering with friends. Your child's school has masks available.
- **Get vaccinated and boosted.** Everyone age 5 and older should get vaccinated against COVID-19, including getting a booster shot when eligible. Vaccines have saved countless lives and are our best defense against the virus. Find a vaccination site at **nyc.gov/vaccinefinder** or by calling 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692). You can get vaccinated for free, regardless of immigration or insurance status.
- **Stay home when sick.** Everyone should stay home if they are sick or test positive for COVID-19 and follow all guidance, including wearing a well-fitting face mask for 10 days.
- **Get tested.** Everyone should get tested if they have COVID-19 symptoms, were recently with someone who has COVID-19, recently traveled or were at a large event. Schools are giving each child four at-home tests per week and testing is available throughout the city. To find a testing site, visit **nyc.gov/covidtest**. Testing is free at many sites.
- **Consider other precautions, such as avoiding crowds, limiting gatherings to a small number of people, increasing ventilation, and wearing a higher quality mask.** This is especially important for people who are at increased risk due to age, underlying medical condition, or because they are unvaccinated.

If you or your child tests positive for COVID-19, call your health care provider or 212-COVID19 (212-268-4319) to ask about treatment options for people age 12 and older. To learn more, including about who is eligible, visit **nyc.gov/health/covidtreatments**. If your child tests positive, please inform their school or ECE program. Children who test positive or are home with symptoms can receive free online learning and office hours while out sick.

If we all do our part, we can beat this COVID-19 wave and enjoy a safe and healthy spring and summer.

Sincerely,

Ashwin Vasan, MD, PhD
Commissioner
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

David C. Banks
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