

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**LDH provides guidance on Mardi Gras safety**

Baton Rouge, La. (February 17, 2022) — As Mardi Gras season gets into full swing, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is sharing guidance with the public on how to celebrate more safely.

Louisiana continues to come down from its Omicron-fueled surge and statewide percent positivity has decreased from 14.3% to 9.1%. We continue to move in the right direction. However, the entire state continues to experience very high levels of COVID transmission.

We know that layered prevention strategies are the most effective way to stay safe, and LDH recommends using similar tools to celebrate Mardi Gras more safely:

- **Mask more, mask better.** Wear the most protective mask you can that fits well and that you will wear consistently. Properly fitted respirators (N95, KN95 or KF94) provide the highest levels of protection. Mask regardless of vaccination status or previous infection. Mask in all indoor public spaces, at indoor private gatherings if members outside of your everyday household are present, and outdoors if social distancing cannot be maintained. Remember: Transmission does occur in crowded outdoor settings.
- **Get vaccinated and boosted, if eligible.** Booster doses strengthen protection within days of receiving the shot.
- **Stay home and get tested if you are sick.**
- **People with underlying medical conditions that place them at higher risk should consider not attending large events.**

"We definitely are on the downswing of our biggest surge yet, but there still is widespread transmission throughout the state. Thankfully, we have more tools to protect ourselves than we have ever had before, and there are many ways to Mardi Gras," said State Health Officer Dr. Joseph Kanter.

Free N95 masks provided by the White House are being distributed to all Winn-Dixie stores in the state, as well as participating Walmart and Sam's Club locations. Masks are also available at the following Walgreens locations:

- 6485 Groom Road, Baker
- 5450 Plank Road, Baton Rouge
- 5955 Airline Hwy., Baton Rouge
- 217 Superior Ave., Bogalusa
- 1401 Rees St., Breaux Bridge
- 101 Florida Ave. S.E., Denham Springs
- 920 W. Gloria Switch Road, Lafayette
- 718 S. Carrollton Ave., New Orleans
- 1260 Front St., Slidell
- 10200 Florida Blvd., Walker
- 5349 Cypress St., West Monroe
- 5061 Main St., Zachary

You can learn about vaccination sites near you by calling Louisiana's vaccine hotline at 1-855-453-0774. You can also find a vaccine site online at ldh.la.gov/covidvaccine or text your ZIP code to GETVAX (438829) in English or VACUNA (822862) in Spanish.

You can find testing site locations and hours at ldh.la.gov/covidtesting or you can call 211 to find a site near you.



CATCH BEADS, NOT COVID

To celebrate Mardi Gras more safely:

- ✓ Mask more, mask better.
- ✓ Get vaccinated and boosted, if eligible.
- ✓ Stay home and get tested if you are sick.
- ✓ Consider staying home from larger events if you are at higher risk for disease.

Book your free vaccine or booster shot at covidvaccine.la.gov or call the Vaccine Hotline **1-855-453-0774**.



About the Louisiana Department of Health

The Louisiana Department of Health strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state residents. The Louisiana Department of Health includes the Office of Public Health, Office of Aging & Adult Services, Office of Behavioral Health, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, and Healthy Louisiana (Medicaid). To learn more, visit www.ldh.la.gov or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or our [blog](#).

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