

## **Vaccine Hesitancy and Breakthrough Infections in Vaccinated People: Where is the Balance?**

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Covid-19 vaccines remain highly effective at preventing severe disease and is the most potential tool in achieving herd immunity and bringing the pandemic under control. While breakthrough infections and disease among vaccinated people remain at a significantly lower rate, most new COVID-19 cases in united states are occurring among unvaccinated people. Current data suggest that COVID-19 vaccines authorized in united states of America offer protection against most circulating variants of COVID-19 virus [1].

There is a difference between breakthrough infections and breakthrough disease. Breakthrough infections occur when a fully vaccinated person tests positive for SARS-Cov-2 virus, breakthrough disease occurs when a fully vaccinated person experiences symptoms of covid-19 disease [1].

Since the initiation of vaccine in December 2020 CDC has partnered with state and local departments of health and investigating the cases of SARS CoV-2 in vaccinated people. In a surveillance by CDC from January to April 2021 a total of 10,262 infections were reported from all over the country in vaccinated individuals. Out of those cases 27% were asymptomatic, 10% hospitalized and only 2% died [1]. Although, this data has its own limitations. The total cases reported could be of substantial undercount as the data collection process is passive reporting and mild and asymptomatic patients might not seek testing. Since May 2021 CDC is focusing on the rates of hospitalizations and deaths in vaccinated people [1].

Vaccine hesitancy remains a big concern in achieving our goal towards herd immunity. The most common reasons for hesitancy nationwide are concerns about side effects (50.6%) and a lack of trust in COVID-19 vaccine (47.6%), according to the census Bureau [2]. Many healthcare organizations across the nation recently had started the mandatory vaccine protocol for the employees to mitigate and prevent the spread if vaccine. The other possible reason behind this breakthrough infections is probably related to not wearing masks after the vaccination in public places. With the new surge of cases CDC now recommends vaccinated people to wear masks in areas with high case numbers.

While a lot of barriers are yet to be achieved, education of patients to discuss vaccine hesitancy should be continued. In addition, the availability of vaccine to younger kids ages 5 - 12 years in the next few months and the third booster dose might help us walk towards achieving the goal of herd immunity for COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Bibliography**

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