



Mary Colurso/TNS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced on Thursday, May 13 that fully vaccinated people don't need to wear face masks in most situations.

MASKS

Continued from Page 5A

To date about 154 million Americans, more than 46% of the population, have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and more than 117 million are fully vaccinated. The rate of new vaccinations has slowed in recent weeks, but with the authorization Wednesday of the Pfizer shot for children ages 12 to 15, a new burst of doses is expected in the coming days.

Just two weeks ago, the CDC recommended that fully vaccinated people continue to wear masks indoors in all settings and outdoors in large crowds.

During a virtual meeting Tuesday on vaccinations with a bipartisan group of governors, Biden appeared to acknowledge that his administration had to do more to model the benefits of vaccination.

Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, a Republican, told Biden: "I would like to say that we have fully vaccinated people; we should start acting like it. And that's a big motivation get the unvaccinated to want to get vaccinated."

"Good point," Biden

"I would like to say that we have fully vaccinated people; we should start acting like it."

— Utah Gov. Spencer Cox

responded. He added, "We're going to be moving on that in the next little bit."

Walensky said evidence from the U.S. and Israel shows the vaccines are as strongly protective in real world use as they were in earlier studies, and that so far they continue to work even though some worry mutated versions of the virus are spreading.

The more people continue to get vaccinated, the faster infections will drop — and the harder it will be for the virus to mutate enough to escape vaccines, she stressed, urging everyone 12 and older who's not yet vaccinated to sign up.

And while some people still get COVID-19 despite being vaccinated, Walensky said, that's rare. She cited evidence that those infections tend to be milder, shorter and harder to spread to others. If people who are vaccinated do develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should immediately put their mask back on and get tested, she said.

There are some caveats. Walensky encouraged people

who have weak immune systems, such as from organ transplants or cancer treatment, to talk with their doctors before shedding their masks. That's because of continued uncertainty about whether the vaccines can rev up a weakened immune system as well as they do normal, healthy ones.

The new guidance had an immediate effect at the White House, which has taken a cautious approach to easing virus restrictions. Staffers were informed that masks are no longer required for people who are fully vaccinated.

And Biden, who was meeting with vaccinated Republican lawmakers in the Oval Office when the guidance was announced, led the group in removing their masks Thursday afternoon.

First lady Jill Biden, who was traveling in West Virginia, told reporters that "we feel naked," after the guidance, as she and her party removed their face coverings. Then she paused. "I didn't mean it that way!"

Tires LES SCHWAB

Is it time to dress up your ride?

Custom WHEELS

Lifts & Leveling Kits **Give us a call at**

Lew Brothers Tire Service
541-523-3679
210 Bridge St. Baker City, OR

Local news updates at www.bakercityherald.com



Thank You, Health Care Workers!

You've worked tirelessly this past year saving lives, keeping spirits up, and comforting the sick and grieving. On behalf of all the lives you've touched, thank you.

