

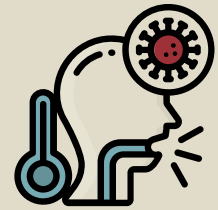


National Indian Health Board NATIONAL TRIBAL COVID-19 RESPONSE

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COVID-19 and Reinfection

Reinfection happens when an infection occurs again after a recovery or presumed recovery from an infection of the same type. For example, a reinfection occurs if a person has had a certain strain of the influenza (flu) virus, but then later gets sick from the same strain again. Based on what we know from similar viruses, some reinfections are expected. Cases of reinfection with COVID-19 have been reported, but remain rare.

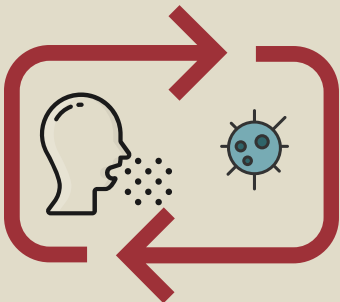


American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations are one of the groups at highest risk for COVID-19 infection, so it is important to take all possible precautions to keep our communities and elders safe.

Why Some Individuals May Become Reinfected

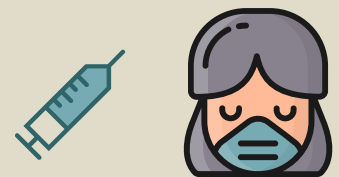
Scientists are still studying SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), and therefore do not have all of the answers yet on immunity, or the biological processes that could lead to reinfection or relapse. But here are some possible answers being explored:

- The possibility that the virus has been re-activated within an individual, or was not completely shed before being considered fully recovered
- The possibility of mutations (changes) in the virus that are not detected by the tests when conducted, which we are seeing now with the Delta variant
- The antibodies produced by the body when the virus is present may not provide long term protection against viral infection
- An individual may still test positive for having COVID-19 since residual effects of the virus remains inside of the infected individual



Ways to Slow the Spread of COVID-19

- Get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can. Ask your Indian Health Service (IHS) or Tribal healthcare provider, pharmacy, or visit vaccines.gov, to find one. For other questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, you can also visit <https://www.ihs.gov/coronavirus/vaccine/>
- Wear a mask that covers your nose or mouth to help protect yourself and others
- Stay 6 feet apart from others who don't live with you
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces
- Wash your hands often, and for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available



Takeaway Messages

Even if you have recovered from COVID-19, or are close to a person that has, preventative measures must still be followed (such as self-quarantine, physical distancing, and using face coverings). Reinfection could contribute to a surge in COVID-19 infections.

For more information, or to learn more about frequently asked questions, visit the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/reinfection.html).
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Disclaimer: This fact sheet is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$2,000,000 with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

For more information, visit NIHB's National Tribal COVID-19 Response page at www.nihb.org