

NEWS

Biden warns if Americans don't get COVID jabs they might have to cancel July 4

By [Steven Nelson](#)

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President Biden said the country has more work to do in terms of mask wearing and COVID vaccinations to safely have July 4 gatherings.

Cliff Owen/AP

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President Biden on Wednesday warned Americans they may have to cancel “small” outdoor gatherings on the Fourth of July if there’s a slowdown of COVID-19 vaccinations.

More than **51 percent** of American adults have received at least one vaccine dose, according to CDC data, indicating that herd immunity and the pandemic’s end are near.

But Biden said at the White House that he’s not yet comfortable saying people can hold small outdoor gatherings on Independence Day.

“Back on March 11, I outlined a vision of what America could look like by the Fourth of July — an America that was much closer to normal life that we left behind more than a year ago,” Biden said.

He warned: "To celebrate our independence from this virus on July 4th with family and friends in small groups, we still have more to do in the months of May and June. We all need to mask up until the number of cases goes down, until everyone has a chance to get their shot."

Biden **proposed in a March primetime address** that people could host "small" outdoor gatherings for the summer holiday. The idea drew Republican criticism due to the efficacy of vaccines and low outdoor transmission rates.


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Retired Admiral Brett Giroir, assistant secretary of health last year, **countered Biden**, saying that "by July, we should be almost back to normal with herd immunity, with everybody getting vaccines."

"I don't know what reality he's talking about," Giroir said. "It seemed very disconnected from the reality and where we are and what the science says. Science says small gatherings outdoors is fine."

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said "the president's proclamation was far out of step with what's already happening across the country."

 In this March 11, 2021, file photo, President Joe Biden holds up his face mask as he speaks about the COVID-19 pandemic during a prime-time address from the East Room of the White House in Washington.

In March, Biden said Americans likely could hold small gatherings to celebrate in July.

Andrew Harnik, File/AP

"It was advice for an alternate universe. The president and his advisers may need to get out more," **McConnell said**.

"Americans are already getting together in small groups outdoors in blue states and red states, in small towns and big cities. The country is not locked down waiting for July 4."

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