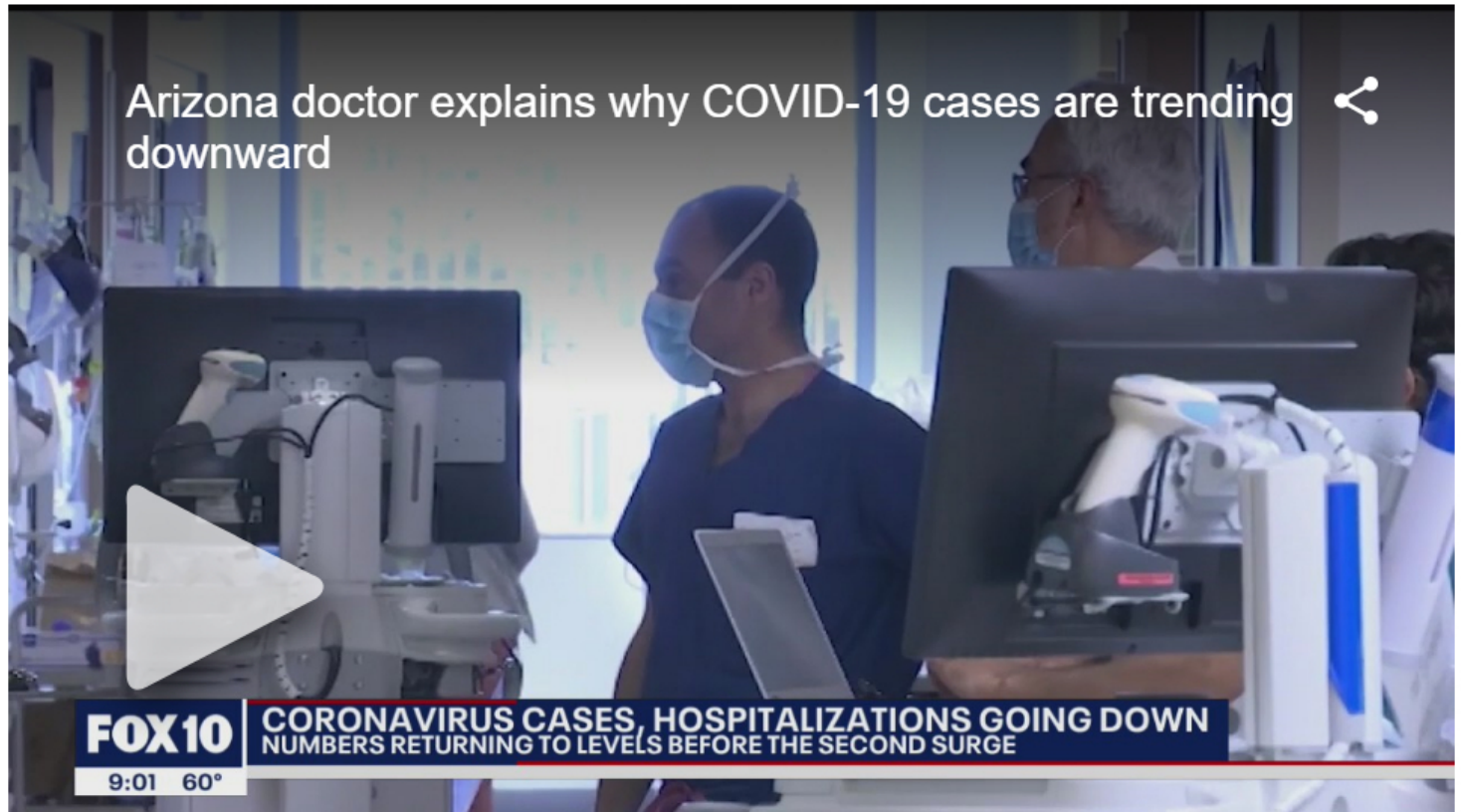


# Arizona doctor explains why COVID-19 cases are trending downward

By Jennifer Martinez and Bailey Miller | Published February 15 | Updated February 16 | Coronavirus in Arizona | FOX 10 Phoenix



## Arizona doctor explains why COVID-19 cases are trending downward

As cases in Arizona and the country trend downward, a Valley doctor says it's not because of the vaccine, but because a big part of the population has gotten the virus and fewer people are walking around spreading it.

**PHOENIX** - Cases of [COVID-19](#) across the country and in Arizona are going down and doctors are attributing that not only to the vaccine but also because of mask-wearing.

It's been nearly two months since the holidays when many people followed the precautions set out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by not gathering and wearing the masks.

That's a big factor in why we are seeing case numbers drop off around the country and in Arizona, doctors say, adding that the public is obviously listening to COVID-19 precautions.

## [Coronavirus in Arizona: Latest case numbers](#)

"The mask-wearing mitigation, the fact that we are off of all of the travel for the holiday season," says Dr. Shad Marvasti, Director of Public Health, Prevention and Health at the University of Arizona.

Experts say the drop is likely not because of the vaccine because nationwide 4% of the population is fully

vaccinated.

In Arizona, there could also be another reason why cases are decreasing and that is due to exposure to the virus.

### **Maricopa County expands COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to adults 65 and older**

About a month ago, the state had about a 20% positivity rate, but that percent positivity may be helping us now. "You now have a level of population exposure which also contributes to a decrease in cases because there aren't the people who are circulating who haven't been exposed to it," Marvasti said.

However, we're not out of the woods yet. That's because he says there are now people testing positive for the second time.

"We are seeing cases of that in the clinics, emergency rooms and my colleagues and I have seen these reinfections from the summertime," Marvasti said.

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He added that the cases he's seen and heard of have not been severe. Another thing he and his colleagues are keeping an eye on are cases stemming from the Super Bowl and Waste Management Phoenix Open.

Find more information from Dr. Marvasti on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

## **Hospital staffing remains unpredictable as the COVID-19 variant spreads**

As of Feb. 15, COVID-19 ICU case numbers are the lowest they've been since Dec. 2, but now, another worry for hospital staff is the new virus variant.

Dr. Ross Goldberg, president of the Arizona Medical Association says the numbers are slowly going back to what we saw before the surge, but now, all eyes on the ICU beds that continue to have an influx of patients, even if it's not because of COVID-19 patients.

"So remember, this is still a busy season for us. While COVID might be going down, we're still busy, so we usually see ICU for other reasons," Goldberg said.

Adding, "We prefer to see the ICU number more distributed than just COVID. Busy ICUs are always something we deal with just not overwhelmed with COVID ..."

While the numbers are encouraging, staffing the hospitals is unpredictable.

"COVID going down is OK, but we're so busy and we're still worried that we're going to have more surges coming in, especially with this new variant. While staffing looks OK right now, it's hard to predict in a few weeks based on what's going on now. It seems like we're gonna be playing catch-up when it happens," he said.