

Dozens in Central Florida Contract COVID-19 after Being Fully Vaccinated

So-called breakthrough cases pop up in Orlando area

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They're called COVID-19 breakthrough cases — people who have been fully vaccinated yet still contract the virus more than 14 days after their second shot.

The cases are popping up around the country, including in Central Florida.

Hanna Rewerts, 27, is a physical therapist and has been tested for COVID-19 at least once a week since the pandemic started.

She says she got her first positive test just days ago.



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“I was shocked, you know,” Rewerts told News 6. “Immediately I’m like, ‘This has to be a false-positive. This can’t be right.’”

But multiple tests confirmed it.

She said she was shocked because she is also fully vaccinated.

As a health care worker, Rewerts had her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine in December 2020, according to her vaccine card. Her second dose was three weeks later in January.

More than two months after the second shot, she contracted the virus.

“So it’s just, it’s very odd,” Rewerts said.

Rewerts is among a growing number of people.

Earlier this month, the Minnesota Department of Health released a health advisory stating that along with the CDC, it is investigating COVID-19 infections among people who are “appropriately vaccinated,” also called vaccine breakthrough cases, according to the advisory.

News 6 checked and the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County has six documented breakthrough cases while Sumter County has six and Lake County has 26 cases, according to emails from each county’s spokesperson.

Dr. Timothy Hendrix is with Advent Health and said it is possible for someone who is fully vaccinated to still contract the virus.

However, the vaccine can prevent more severe cases, including hospitalization and death. It is still important to get vaccinated from COVID-19.

“It is possible because no vaccine is perfect,” Hendrix said.

Hendrix stressed that both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are 95% effective, though.

“The good news is for that very small amount of people that might become infected, that less than 5%, the chances of severe disease is next to zero,” Hendrix said.

Breakthrough cases are not specific to COVID-19 and can happen with any vaccine, according to experts.

Rewerts said three of her family members who were also fully vaccinated contracted it as well.

“One of my family members actually went to the hospital,” Rewerts said. “I mean, that’s pretty severe enough to be concerned about the vaccine.”

Rewerts said the Florida Department of Health is testing to see whether she may have been infected by one of the COVID-19 variants that has made it to Florida.

She said for now, she and her family will continue social distancing and wearing masks.

“I don’t think the public is aware that it doesn’t mean you’re not getting the virus, and it doesn’t mean you’re not getting sick. There is still a chance,” Rewerts said.

Hendrix put it this way.

“The one thing you should know is every vaccine that’s been approved at this point, is highly effective at preventing the one major endpoint: hospitalization and death,” Hendrix said.

Researchers are still trying to figure out if people who are fully vaccinated and contract the virus can also spread it to other people, which is why they recommend still wearing masks even after you’re vaccinated.

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Emmy Award-winning reporter Louis Bolden joined the News 6 team in September of 2001 and hasn’t gotten a moment’s rest since. Louis has been a General Assignment Reporter for News 6 and Weekend Morning Anchor. He joined the Special Projects/Investigative Unit in 2014.

Featured image is a screenshot from the video

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