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IDPH Endorses Bivalent COVID-19 Booster Recommendation for Children 5 and Older

Public Health Officials Urge Parents to Protect Children from COVID-19, Flu and Other Respiratory Virus as Pediatric Cases Mount; Illinois Announces 10,416 New Cases of COVID-19 in Past Week

CHICAGO – Following the CDC’s recommendation this week of the new bivalent boosters for children five and older, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Sameer Vohra is recommending parents and guardians get children vaccinated and fully protected to avoid the most severe effects of COVID-19. Director Vohra is also reminding parents that with flu season underway, they should also take action to protect their children from the risk of serious illness by getting the COVID-19 and flu vaccines. Children can receive both these vaccinations at the same time.

The push to protect children comes as the CDC released data showing that 16 counties in Illinois are rated at [Medium Community Level for COVID-19](#). IDPH is reporting 10,416 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Illinois, including 52 deaths since October 7.

“I was pleased to see the CDC expand updated COVID-19 vaccines to include children aged 5 to 11 years old,” Director Vohra said. “This expansion comes at a critical time in Illinois and across the country, as we are seeing a sharp increase in severe childhood respiratory infections resulting in a shortage of available pediatric hospital beds. The updated bivalent COVID-19 booster, along with the flu vaccine, give parents two powerful tools to protect their children from severe illness and hospitalization. With a surge in childhood respiratory illnesses already occurring, and the possibility of diseases like COVID-19 and the flu rising later this fall and winter, now is the best time to get these safe, effective vaccinations.”

IDPH is working with the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) to encourage physicians and parents to ensure children are fully protected from COVID-19 and the flu. ICAAP is providing resources for doctors and parents [HERE](#).

More than 890,000 Illinoisans have received a dose of the new, bivalent COVID-19 vaccines since they were approved for use in early September, including almost 190,000 doses in the last

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week. Daily vaccination numbers are at the highest level seen since early February, during the major surge in illnesses caused by the Omicron variant.

IDPH reported that over the last week, an average of more than 27,000 doses of the new bivalent vaccines were administered across the state each day. This is more than double the daily average for all vaccinations for most of the summer. Among the total eligible Illinois population of those 12 and older (until the approval this week for those 5 and older), 10.5 percent have received the new booster. The rate is higher among those 65 and older, at 19.8 percent of the eligible Illinois population.

The CDC authorized two new bivalent booster vaccines on September 2 that include an mRNA component of the original strain to provide an immune response that is broadly protective against COVID-19 and an added mRNA component in common between the omicron variant BA.4 and BA.5 lineages to provide better protection against COVID-19 caused by the omicron variant.

The Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine, Bivalent, is authorized for use as a single booster dose in individuals 18 years of age and older. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, Bivalent, is authorized for use as a single booster dose in individuals 12 years of age and older.

The updated boosters are available at pharmacies, hospitals, and other healthcare providers. The best way to locate a vaccine provider near you is to visit www.vaccines.gov and search for bivalent booster availability.

Currently, IDPH is reporting a total of 3,784,083 cases, including 35,125 deaths, in 102 counties in Illinois since the beginning of the pandemic.

As of last night, 991 individuals in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 112 patients were in the ICU and 39 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators. The preliminary seven-day statewide case rate is 82 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 Illinoisans.

In counties at the **Medium Community Level**, persons who are elderly or immunocompromised (at risk of severe outcomes) are advised to wear a mask in indoor public places. They should also get up to date on COVID-19 vaccines or get their bivalent booster, if eligible.

IDPH has been supporting pharmacies and healthcare providers in efforts to increase their inventories of the various FDA-authorized treatments. There are [over 1,200 treatment locations](#) in Illinois - including all the major retail pharmacies. More than 96.7% of the state's population is within a 10-mile radius of one of these locations.

A total of 24,240,966 vaccines have been administered in Illinois. The seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is 29,602 doses, including the bivalent booster and first doses. Since October 7, 207,214 doses were reported administered in Illinois. Of Illinois' total population, more than 77% has received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, more than 70% of Illinois' total population is fully vaccinated, and more than 55% of the vaccinated population has an initial booster according to [data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Data indicates that the risk of hospitalization and severe outcomes from COVID-19 is much higher for unvaccinated people than for those who are up to date on their vaccinations. All data



NEWS RELEASE

are provisional and are subject to change. Additional information and COVID-19 data can be found at <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19.html>.

Vaccination is the key to ending this pandemic. To find a COVID-19 vaccination location near you, go to www.vaccines.gov. The federal government has established a new website that provides an all-purpose toolkit with information on how to obtain masks, treatment, vaccines and testing resources for all areas of the country at: <https://www.covid.gov/>.

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