

Illinois Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

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Immunizations and COVID-19 Fact Sheet

The Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) has developed this fact sheet to provide pediatric providers with information and resources on immunization routine visits during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We encourage you to use and share information found on our site dedicated to COVID-19 at illinoisAAP.org/covid-19/. If you have additional questions or have immunization-related resources to share, please email ICAAP at covid19@illinoisAAP.com.

Seasonal Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19

Q: *Should people be more concerned about the seasonal flu or COVID-19?*

A: There is widespread seasonal flu activity going on right now all around the U.S. Like clockwork, with this year's influenza strain, it will die out in Spring because it will run its course. The challenge with COVID-19 is that we probably can't contain it and we don't know if we're really prepared as a country for a massive coronavirus epidemic.

Preventative measures to reduce your chances of contracting the seasonal flu and COVID-19 include:

- Get the Annual Flu Shot (*solely for Flu, does not prevent COVID-19*)
- 20 Seconds of Handwashing with Soap and Water
- Cover your Mouth and Nose when Coughing and Sneezing
- Staying Home when Sick (if possible)
- Social Distancing (limiting face-to-face interaction)

Additionally, the seasonal flu and COVID-19 have similar, but also very different symptoms.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Fever
- Dry Cough
- Noticeable Shortness of Breath
- Symptoms Appear 2-14 days Following Exposure

Flu

- High Fever
- Extreme Exhaustion
- Muscle or Body Aches
- Dry Cough
- Chills
- Stuffy Nose
- Headaches
- Possible Vomiting or Diarrhea (common in children)

Routine Immunizations/Office Visits Guidance and COVID-19

Q: Is there Guidance on General Routine Immunization Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

A: It is recommended to consider how your practice or clinic can incorporate and continue to provide routine immunization services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Any disruption of immunization services, even for short periods, will result in an accumulation of susceptible individuals, and a higher likelihood of VPD outbreaks.

[More information can be found here](#)

Q: Is there Any Specific Guidance on Child Routine Immunization Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

A: The COVID-19 pandemic is changing rapidly and continues to affect communities across the United States differently. Ensuring the delivery of newborn and well-childcare, including childhood immunization, requires different strategies. Healthcare providers in communities affected by COVID-19 are using strategies to separate well visits from sick visits.

Examples include:

- Scheduling well visits in the morning and sick visits in the afternoon.
- Separating patients spatially, such as by placing patients with sick visits in different areas of the clinic or another location from patients with well visits.
- Collaborating with providers in the community to identify separate locations for holding well visits for children.

Because of personal, practice, or community circumstances related to COVID-19, some providers may not be able to provide well child visits, including provision of immunizations, for all patients in their practice. If a practice can provide only limited well child visits, healthcare providers are encouraged to prioritize newborn care and vaccination of infants and young

children (through 24 months of age) when possible. The CDC is monitoring the situation and will continue to provide guidance.

Q: Does the American Academy of Pediatrics have recommendations for primary care pediatric offices in terms of addressing well child and sick visits and provision of immunizations?

A: The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly supports the provision of well childcare consistent with the Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the benefit of attending a well visit and receiving necessary immunizations and screenings should be balanced with the risk of exposure to other children and adults with potential contagious diseases. These recommendations are based on available evidence and should be considered in the context of your patient population and practice environment. The AAP is pursuing a robust advocacy agenda to enable practice adjustments during this pandemic and mitigate negative effects.

Currently, AAP guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic includes considering modifications to the structure of your clinic schedule and physical space. Immunizing the youngest children is top priority in the context of well childcare. This guidance is subject to change as new evidence on the SARS-CoV-2 virus emerges. Pediatricians should consider community spread of COVID-19 and the volume of sick patients that they are currently seeing in clinical settings, as they make decisions regarding their clinical practice. Practices and pediatricians may choose to make adjustments to their usual clinical operations:

- Consider only conducting well visits for newborns, and for infants and younger children who require immunizations; reschedule well visits for those in middle childhood and adolescence to a later date.
- Increase capacity to deliver telehealth.
- If available, pediatricians are encouraged to utilize “drive through” dedicated COVID-19 testing sites.

Q: Is there additional guidance on well child and sick visits and provision of immunizations?

A: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed guidance that is relevant to the way pediatric practices approach caring for children. For patients and families who may have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2, the CDC has developed What Healthcare Personnel Should Know about Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection.

In addition, they have [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings.](#)

CDC provides [guidance for administering vaccines](#) when a child is sick.

Chicago Department of Public Health and the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program

Q: Where can I find the most up-to-date information on the Vaccines for Children Program as a Chicago provider/clinic?

A: Information on the Chicago Vaccines for Children program can be found [here](#). Additionally, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) released an updated Chicago VFC News Bulletin with information on in-person visits, office closures, regional meetings and more. The VFC News Bulletin can be found [here](#).

Illinois Department of Public Health and the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program

Q: Where can I find the most up-to-date information on the Vaccines for Children Program as an Illinois provider/clinic?

A: Information on the Illinois Vaccines for Children Program can be found at the Illinois Department of Public Health's (IDPH) [website](#).

Sign up for rapid communication, alerting and confirmation between state and local agencies, public and private partners, target disciplines and authorized individuals in support of state and local emergency preparedness and response.

SIREN is used for targeted alerting based on members professional roles or functions. It is not intended for use as a public warning system at this time. During your registration you will need to enter contact information and select your specific organization and function. [Register Here](#)

Note: If your practice is not currently administering immunizations, refer to your local health department for guidance and make a list of patients for follow up.

Sources:

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/covid-19-clinical-guidance-q-a/>

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/coronavirus-vs-flu>

<https://www.uchicagomedicine.org/forefront/prevention-and-screening-articles/wuhan-coronavirus>

<https://www.livescience.com/getting-flu-shot-help-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

https://illinoisaap.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Chicago-VFC-News-Bulletin_3_25_20.pdf

<https://www.chicagohan.org/vfc>

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