2023-2024 Flu Recommendations

The [2023-2024 recommendations for use of flu vaccine](#) are available. All flu vaccines have been updated to target the new virus strains and are quadrivalent. People with egg allergies can receive a flu shot without needing to visit a special medical setting. The recommendations otherwise remain the same as last flu season.

Both ACIP and AAP recommend everyone 6 months and older, without contraindications, receive the flu shot that is appropriate for their age. Those individuals who need one flu shot should aim to receive it in September or October. Co-administration of flu vaccines with other vaccines (including COVID-19) is safe and encouraged to help avoid missed opportunities.

Find more tools (including flyers and social media graphics) for promoting flu vaccine uptake in ICAAP’s Flu Vaccine toolkit. The AAP has also released a Flu Clinic toolkit. The toolkit includes resources for pediatric practices to plan and implement in-office vaccination clinics. Promotional resources such as social media graphics, editable posters, a one-pager for families, videos on influenza vaccination, and a HealthyChildren.org article for families in multiple languages are also available through the AAP’s toolkit. Thank you for all you do to protect children and their families every year against flu.
2023 - 2024 COVID-19 Vaccines

The FDA and CDC have given the green light on the rollout of updated 2023–2024 COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna. These monovalent (single) component mRNA vaccines target Omicron variant XBB.1.5. **With this decision, the bivalent COVID-19 vaccines are no longer authorized for use.** Please follow jurisdictional recommendations for disposing of bivalent vaccines. The storage and handling and dosing guidelines for these new products are available here:

- [Comirnaty](#) (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) (2023-2024 Formula)
- [Spikevax](#) (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) (2023-2024 Formula)
- [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine](#) (2023-2024 Formula)
- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine](#) (2023-2024 Formula)

Check [CDC's interim clinical guidance](#) for additional information and [I-VAC’s resource page](#) for updated dosing charts soon. Here is a brief overview of eligibility:

- Individuals 5 years of age and older regardless of previous vaccination are eligible to receive a single dose of an updated mRNA COVID-19 vaccine at least two months since the last dose of any COVID-19 vaccine.
- Individuals 6 months through 4 years of age who have previously been vaccinated against COVID-19 are eligible to receive one or two doses of an updated mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (timing and number of doses to administer depends on the previous COVID-19 vaccine received).
- Unvaccinated individuals 6 months through 4 years of age are eligible to receive three doses of the updated authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine or two doses of the updated authorized Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine.

The original Novavax COVID-19 vaccine remains authorized for use as a 2-dose primary series for those ages 12+ and as a booster dose for those ages 18+ in limited situations. Authorizations or approvals for 2023 – 2024 Novavax COVID-19 vaccine will be determined by FDA with CDC recommendations to follow.

**ICAAP Resources for You**

Explore ICAAP’s new [webpage](#) for guidance on managing respiratory virus season, including flu, COVID-19 and RSV. Helpful COVID-19 resources include patient posters and handouts, as well as resources for providers. Even more resources regarding COVID-19 vaccine commercialization and updated vaccine guidance will be available soon!
Stocking 2023-2024 Vaccines

This information covers ordering outside of Vaccines for Children or other state/local programs only. Order Pfizer’s 2023 - 2024 COVID-19 monovalent vaccine using Pfizer Prime or through wholesalers. The 6 month – 4 year old product will come in 3-dose vials, while the others will be available as single-dose vials (with limited quantities of pre-filled syringes available for the 12 years+ product). For orders placed directly with Pfizer, 15% of total doses purchased, or the greater of the direct minimum order quantity units of sale, can be returned.

Order Moderna’s 2023 - 2024 COVID-19 monovalent vaccine through Moderna Direct or through wholesalers. For children 6 months -11 years old, the vaccines will come in single dose vials in 10 count cartons. For those 12 years and older, vaccines will come in single dose pre-filled syringes in 10 count cartons with a blister pack or as single dose vials, also in 10 count cartons. 10% of a received order can be returned.

Omicron Variant BA.2.86

A recent article by Your Local Epidemiologist, Katelyn Jetelina, detailed what we know about BA.2.86. This variant has heavily mutated, not following the typical pattern of Omicron variant mutations expected to be seen. BA.2.86 has 35 new mutations on the spike protein and seems to be spreading quickly and has been found in ten countries. This variant is better at immune escape, but recent lab data is only showing a 2-3x escape and not 10x more than XBB.1.5., as was originally thought. This means the variant will cause infections, but not as much as expected. The good news is that vaccinations will help protect against BA.2.86.

Eric Topol, author of the Good Truths blog, noted in his September 8th post that: Data published (preprint) with Moderna’s XBB.1.5 booster show very good levels of neutralizing antibodies induced against BA.2.86, in keeping with the response to the target of XBB.1.5 (8.7X vs 10X rise, all participants, top, respectively). Also note the similar response to two of the major current circulating variants of EG.5.1 and FL.1.5.1. Paxlovid and antigen testing continue to work for BA.2.86.

Novavax Safety Monitoring

A total of 69,227 Novavax COVID-19 vaccine doses were given to patients over the age of 12 between July 13, 2022 and March 13, 2023. The August 4, 2023 MMWR summarizes data analyzed for safety and adverse events. Of the 230 adverse events (AEs) reported for Novavax administration to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), over 90% of them were considered to be non-serious. The most reported AEs included dizziness, fatigue, and headaches. 8.3% of AEs were considered serious and they included thrombosis, pericarditis, Guillain-Barre syndrome, and two cases of seizures. No deaths were reported. Vaccine administration errors were also reported and can often be prevented with additional education, training, and use of a pre-vaccination checklist. This safety monitoring data does not differ from clinical trials and does not bring new safety concerns.
Maintaining Measles Elimination

In 2023, there have been 19 reported cases of measles. 84% of cases are linked to international travel, with unvaccinated US travelers importing measles, notably from India, the Philippines, China, Pakistan, and the UK. The last outbreak reported in 2022 mainly affected eligible but unvaccinated children. The US has maintained the elimination of measles (absence of continuous disease transmission for ≥ 12 months) since 2000 through successful vaccination and early detection programs. The MMR vaccine is both safe and effective and the CDC recommends all eligible children and international travelers who lack immunity obtain the 2-dose vaccine. To learn more, watch the Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) call.

HPV Vaccine Reimbursement Rates

HPV vaccines are one of the most expensive vaccines among routine recommended pediatric vaccines; an analysis of vaccination reimbursement trends suggests that improving reimbursement rates could boost HPV vaccine rates among adolescents. The study, which included data from 30,000 clinicians, found that reimbursement rates were lowest for family physicians and highest for pediatricians. For every $1 increase in reimbursement, there was an associated 0.08% increase in vaccination rates per dollar. Family physicians, critical in rural areas with limited access to pediatricians, were found to be inadequately reimbursed for the HPV vaccine, potentially discouraging them from offering it. The findings highlight the importance of addressing reimbursement disparities to improve HPV vaccination rates and prevent HPV-related cancers.

Reminders

☑ Stay up-to-date with the CDC’s list of Errata/Updates for Immunizations

☑ IDPH: Vaccine deliveries for VFC, 317, and COVID-19 will not be available on Monday, October 9, 2023.

☑ Did you know? M-M-R II and ProQuad may be administered subcutaneously OR intramuscularly. Learn more about MMR vaccine administration here.
Promoting Routine Childhood Vaccinations

Recommendations to Encourage Vaccination

Promoting childhood vaccines is crucial, especially in the face of growing vaccine safety misinformation. The Public Health Communications Collaborative, using national polling data, has developed tailored messaging guidelines to enhance community support for these vaccines. These messages include:

- Underscore the individual benefits of routine childhood vaccination: Promote routine childhood vaccinations by highlighting personal health benefits like illness prevention and social engagement and avoid focusing on mandates.
- Craft separate messaging on COVID-19 vaccines for children and routine childhood vaccines: Use tailored messaging for COVID-19 vaccines, consider local demographics, and highlight the safety and effectiveness of routine vaccines with scientific evidence.
- Leverage a wide range of trusted messengers in your community to communicate the importance of routine childhood vaccinations: Utilize trusted community figures like faith-based leaders and neighborhood organizers to promote vaccination.

To read more about the messaging guidelines and other resources, click here.

Increasing Vaccine Confidence

The 3Cs (Confident, Concise, and Consistent) concept, developed by the Unity Consortium, can aid parents and adolescents in transitioning from vaccine hesitancy to vaccine confidence and same-day vaccination. The 3Cs training initiative equips healthcare providers to handle vaccine concerns and hesitancy through real-life scenarios by promoting confident, concise, and consistent recommendations. The program features self-guided training you can apply yourself and with your clinical team. You can learn more and sign up to access the program here.
RSV Prevention

Nirsevimab (Beyfortus) is a monoclonal antibody that has been authorized by the CDC to prevent RSV. This product is not a vaccine, but it is an immunization as it provides passive immunity. It is administered via IM injection and will be available through the VFC program. Here are some important details about Nirsevimab:

- Eligibility:
  - Infants under 8 months born during or entering their first RSV season.
  - Children 8 months through 19 months who are at increased risk of severe RSV disease and entering their second RSV season.
- Can be safely co-administered with age-appropriate vaccines.
- Palivizumab (SYNAGIS) can still be used if Nirsevimab is not available
  - If < 5 doses of palivizumab are administered and nirsevimab becomes available, the child should receive 1 dose of nirsevimab.
  - No further palivizumab should be administered following receipt of nirsevimab.

You may also be hearing about Arexvy and Abrysvo, which are vaccines to prevent RSV in older adults and pregnant women. These products will not be part of the VFC program, but will be important tools in reducing the burden of RSV.

Additional Resources:
- Slides and recording from ICAAP’s 9/6/23 webinar on RSV prevention
- Patient handouts: English and Spanish
- Provider handout

Pneumococcal Vaccine Updates

As of September 1, 2023 Prevnar20 (PCV20) is now available for order through VFC. With this change, Prevnar13 (PCV13) is no longer available to order. If you have PCV13 in your stock and it is the only pneumococcal vaccine available at the time of a child’s appointment, it may be administered as recommended. All children six weeks through 59 months of age and children 5 through 18 years of age with certain underlying medical conditions are eligible to receive PCV20. Either PCV15 or PCV20 may be used for the full series or to complete the recommended schedule begun with PCV13. Find more information about administering pneumococcal vaccines here.
Upcoming Events

PREPARING FOR RESPIRATORY VIRUS SEASON WEBINAR

Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 12PM

IN-PERSON VACCINE SUMMITS

Thursday, Sept. 21st 2023: Kane County, Elgin Community College
Friday, Sept. 29th 2023: Champaign County, Parkland College
Tuesday, Oct. 3rd 2023: Williamson County, John A Logan College
Wednesday, Oct. 11th 2023: Cook County, Oakton Community College

ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Thursday, Nov. 9th & Friday, Nov. 10th at NIU Campus Naperville

COVID-19 VACCINE COMMERCIALIZATION UPDATES

Friday, Sept. 15 at 12PM
Friday, Sept. 29 at 12PM
Friday, Oct. 13 at 12PM

SPECIAL SESSION: OBGYN I-VAC VACCINE BOOTCAMP

Thursday, Sept. 28 at 8AM-10AM

ECHO-CHICAGO COVID-19 LEARNING COLLABORATIVES

Biweekly on Tuesdays at 5:30PM. Next one is September 26th. Register here.