2024 Immunization Schedules

The CDC's immunization schedules for children and adults have been updated and are effective immediately. These are endorsed by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). This comes ahead of when updated schedules are usually released. A comprehensive MMWR publication is expected in early 2024. The most notable changes include:

- Changing document headers from "Vaccines" to "Vaccines and Other Immunizing Agents" to cover RSV monoclonal antibodies.
- The inclusion of new entries for RSV-mAb(nirsevimab), RSVPreF(Abrysvo), and mpox.
- Deletion of outdated or no longer recommended vaccines.
- Updates on COVID-19, Influenza, Meningococcal, Pneumococcal, and Poliovirus vaccines.

Note that the November newsletter highlighted the ACIP vote on Pentavalent meningococcal vaccines and the full guidance is now available on the CDC’s website. Recommendations state that Pfizer’s MenABCWY vaccine may be used for patients 10 years or older when both MenACWY and MenB are indicated at the same visit. Healthcare providers should always refer to the full CDC guidance before changing practices and/or administering vaccines.

For the full schedules and detailed recommendations, visit the CDC Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule webpage.

2024 Immunization Schedules are now available and effective immediately.

Reminder: the schedules summarize final recommendations that were previously adopted and made official by the CDC director.

- Child and Adolescent Recommended Immunization Schedule, 2024
- Adult Recommended Immunization Schedule, 2024
Comirnaty: Storage and Handling for Plastic vs Glass Prefilled Syringes

Comirnaty (Pfizer) 2023 - 2024 COVID-19 vaccine prefilled syringes for ages 12+ are available in a glass or plastic syringe, these products have different storage requirements.

**Glass pre-filled syringes:**
- Cannot be stored in ultra-low temperature (ULT) freezers [-90 °C to -60 °C (-130 °F to -76 °F)] or in the freezer [-25 °C to -15 °C (-13 °F to 5 °F)].
- Can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 6 months starting from the date of manufacture to the expiration date.
- Can be left out at room temperature for no longer than 12 hours.

**Plastic pre-filled syringes**
- Can be stored in ULT freezers for up to 9 months.
- Can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 10 weeks.
- Must be used within 4 hours of thawing (room temperature).

The I-VAC storage and handling charts are updated to reflect this information.

Updated COVID-19 Fee Schedule

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) has updated their COVID-19 Vaccine Fee Schedule to include 2023/2024 products. Fees listed on this document will be effective through December 31, 2023. Updated information for Novavax, Pfizer, and Moderna vaccines are included, as well as previous codes for vaccine counseling, telehealth appointments, treatments, testing, and laboratory costs.

A proposal for COVID-19 vaccine reimbursements starting January 1, 2024 is outlined here. The proposed changes bring the amounts down to be in line with reimbursements for other vaccines.
Vaccine Confidence Falls as Belief in Health Misinformation Grows

A recent health survey by Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania reveals concerning trends in Americans’ vaccine confidence and acceptance of misinformation. 1,500 US adults were surveyed and results showed that vaccine safety confidence dropped from 77% to 71% since April 2021, particularly impacting the perception of the COVID-19 vaccine, which declined from 77% to 63%. The study indicates a rise in misinformation acceptance, with 26% believing ivermectin is an effective treatment for COVID-19 and 16% attributing increased vaccinations to autism in kids.

Confidence in the safety and effectiveness of specific vaccines, including MMR and COVID-19, also declined. While 67% claim a return to pre-COVID normalcy, 20% believe their lives have permanently changed. The study emphasized the urgent need to address declining vaccine confidence and combat misinformation for public health protection.

Vaccine Coverage in Kindergarten Aged Children

Kindergarten vaccination rates in the U.S. have not recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic and exemptions from school requirements reached a record high of 3% during the 2022-2023 school year. In a recent MMWR, the CDC analyzed data from 49 states and Washington DC, finding that coverage for key vaccines (MMR, DTaP, polio, and varicella) was 93%, down from 95% in the 2019-2020 school year. Almost all states saw exemptions increase, with the most being nonmedical exemptions. Your Local Epidemiologist (YLE) also stresses the importance of needing to keep vaccine coverage high to maintain herd immunity. With measles coverage below the 95% threshold, there is a higher chance of having outbreaks, as occurred in Ohio last year affecting 85 children who got sick and 36 of whom were hospitalized. Nonmedical exemptions for religious or philosophical reasons are the biggest drivers to the increase in exemptions, which is most common in areas with higher percentages of White population and higher income. A rise in misinformation, especially on social media, is also indirectly causing a decrease in vaccinations, with 1 in 8 people believing vaccine misinformation. Disruptions in healthcare during the pandemic, which caused missed vaccinations, further compounds the issue. The consequence is a potential resurgence of infectious diseases in areas with declining vaccination rates. Enforcing school vaccine requirements, implementing reminder recall systems, and following up with under-vaccinated students are all effective strategies to increase vaccine coverage.
Resources and News

Vaccine Delivery Holidays

**IDPH:** The Immunization Department will be closed on the following days:
- Monday, December 25, 2023
- Monday, January 1, 2024
- Monday, January 15, 2024

Vaccine shipments for VFC, Adult 317, and Bridge Access Vaccine Program will be limited due to upcoming holidays. To ensure delivery in December, orders should have been submitted by Friday, December 8, 2023. No vaccine delivery will take place between December 21, 2023 and January 1, 2024. Providers are encouraged to order early to maintain 4 weeks of inventory to prevent vaccine outages.

**CDPH:** All vaccine orders should have been placed by Friday, December 8, 2023 to ensure they are shipped prior to the holidays. Orders will be delivered in the order they are received and shipping will resume on January 3, 2024.

**IDPH Transition to Prevnar 20**

IDPH VFC providers can choose to use their remaining Prevnar 13 vaccines until expiration or transition to Prevnar 20 and waste remaining Prevnar 13 doses without penalty. Guidelines for recording wastage transactions in I-CARE are provided in the SIREN. CDPH made this transition in September (see page 3 here for additional CDPH guidance).

Chikungunya Vaccine Approved by FDA

The world's first vaccine for chikungunya was approved by the FDA on November 9. The vaccine, Ixchig, is approved for individuals 18 years of age and older who are at increased risk of exposure to chikungunya virus which is primarily transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. The risk of infection is highest in tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, Southeast Asia, and parts of the Americas, with at least 5 million cases reported globally in the past 15 years. The new vaccine is administered as a single-dose injection into the muscle. The vaccine contains a live, weakened version of the chikungunya virus, which can cause chikungunya-like symptoms such as fever, joint pain, rash, and headache. The approval of the new vaccine is a crucial step in addressing the potential severity and lingering health issues associated with the infection.

**AAP Pneumococcal Vaccines Webpage**

With vaccine recommendations and products continuously evolving, the AAP has created a new webpage dedicated to pneumococcal vaccines to help providers keep up-to-date. The webpage outlines AAP recommendations on routine pneumococcal vaccines, updated guidance as of June 2023, and additional tools/resources to assist with implementation in practices.
RSV Prevention Updates

Ordering Guidance and Program Flexibilities
With a finite number of nirsevimab doses being distributed across the country, IDPH and CDPH have received a very limited supply of nirsevimab for the remainder of the season. IDPH is currently assessing how to distribute the remaining doses equitably. Providers in CDPH's jurisdiction should email RSV section@cityofchicago.org or leave a note in their orders if they need and are prepared to administer doses.

Despite the CDC's allowance for bi-directional borrowing of nirsevimab for those VFC providers who maintain private stock for the 2023-2024 respiratory virus season, IDPH and CDPH will not permit this due to the limited private market supply. In line with the CDC allowance for this season, VFC providers will however not be required to meet the private inventory requirement for nirsevimab until August 1, 2024.

Coding
Coding for nirsevimab and/or palivizumab (Synagis) is outlined in the AAP’s article on how to code for RSV immunization. These products are not vaccines and are not for the treatment of RSV. The article outlines how to use the CPT codes for administration, counseling, and diagnosis. Providers should also review important notices recently published by HFS for additional information about coverage of Beyfortus and Abrysvo for Illinois Medicaid patients.

Other RSV Products
Adult RSV vaccines, Abrysvo and Arexvy, are available to order through IDPH’s 317 Adult Vaccine program. Arexvy and Abrysvo are both recommended for people 60 years and older, while Abrysvo is also licensed and recommended for individuals in their 32nd-36th week of pregnancy. These vaccines are not approved for infants and should not be administered to that population.

Responses to Supply Issues
In a response to the lack of supply of nirsevimab, US Senators wrote a letter to Sanofi and AstraZeneca urging them to enhance accessibility and asking for transparency in how things happened.

There continues to be concerns and frustrations over the difficulty in accessing this lifesaving product in the midst of another serious RSV season. To learn more about clinical guidance and the shortages plaguing RSV immunization, review the slides and recording from a December 8 webinar held with ICAAP, IDPH, and CDPH.

Families and caregivers can access the latest news on Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), strategies for safeguarding their infants, and options for RSV immunizations during pregnancy or for newborns at healthychildren.org and on ICAAP's respiratory virus webpage.
Funding Available for COVID-19 Vaccinators in IL

Apply now for up to $20,000 to support:

- Vaccine storage and equipment
- Education and addressing vaccine hesitancy
- Staff travel to vaccination clinics or events
- Translation services
- Creation and distribution of vaccine education and outreach materials

Click [here](#) or scan the QR code to apply by December 15, 2023.

Email cwerenskjold@illinoisaap.com with any questions

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Upcoming Events

ECHO-Chicago COVID-19 Learning Collaboratives

Last session of the year:
December 19, 2023 at 5:30PM.
Register here.

Upcoming Webinar: A Review of 2023 Vaccine Updates & What to Expect in 2024
December 19, 2023 at 12PM

Scan to register

Remembering Rosalynn Carter

Rosalynn Carter, former first lady, passed away on November 19 at age 96 and is celebrated for her impactful work in advocating for childhood immunizations. Honored by the AAP for her contributions, she co-founded Every Child by Two in response to a measles epidemic, leading to laws mandating child vaccinations for school entry. As president of Vaccinate Your Family until 2021, her advocacy played a pivotal role in public health. Her legacy includes significant contributions to childhood immunization and public health awareness, leaving a lasting impact on the well-being of children.