

Catch-up pediatric patients on vaccines missed during the pandemic

Childhood and adolescent vaccination rates have decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Health care providers should make every effort to get kids caught up on the vaccines they need including COVID-19 vaccine before the school year begins. Families look to health care providers as the most trusted source for information on vaccines. Check-out our new Pediatric Immunization Gaps Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/hcp/vaxpan.html) page to learn more about state and county level data on pediatric vaccination gaps as well as action steps and resources.

Promote all recommended vaccines at the same visit

Don't miss an opportunity to vaccinate with all recommended child, adolescent, and adult vaccines, including COVID-19! COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines may be administered on the same day. ACIP recommends the use of COVID-19 vaccines for everyone ages 12 and older within the scope of the emergency use authorization or the biological license for the particular vaccine. If administering other vaccines on the same day along with COVID-19 vaccine it may be more likely to cause a local reaction (such as adjuvanted vaccines or live vaccines). Administer them in different limbs when possible, and let people know of potential for increased reactogenicity. For additional details refer to CDC's Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines (www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html).

Additional COVID-19 vaccine dose for people who are immunocompromised

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted Aug. 13, 2021, to recommend an additional dose of Pfizer or Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for patients that are moderately to severely immunocompromised. The patient's clinical team is best able to assess the degree of altered immunocompetence and optimal timing of vaccination, with specific attention paid to current or planned immunosuppressive therapies.

Find additional information, including more specific details about moderate and severe immunocompromising conditions and considerations for vaccination, in the CDC Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines (www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html#considerations-additional-vaccine-dose).

Booster doses

Public health and medical experts from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released information on initial plans for COVID-19 vaccine booster doses among adults on Aug. 18, 2021. Booster doses are currently not recommended. Both FDA authorization and updated recommendations from ACIP need to occur before that happens. Read the HHS press release at Joint Statement from HHS Public Health and Medical Experts on COVID-19 Booster Shots (www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/08/18/joint-statement-hhs-public-health-and-medical-experts-covid-19-booster-shots.html).

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Continue your current focus to get unvaccinated patients vaccinated and complete vaccination series in partially vaccinated people. COVID-19 vaccine providers should begin making plans to provide booster/additional doses to adults in early fall.

2021-22 MnVFC flu vaccine distribution

Minnesota Vaccines for Children (MnVFC) 2021-22 flu vaccine began shipping to providers this month. You will receive a confirmation email when we process your order. You can check the status of your prebook requests at any time in MIIC. Learn more in the Aug. 17 MnVFC Announcement (www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/hcp/mnvfc/announcements.html).

Fall flu guide is coming

The 2021-22 Minnesota Fall Flu Guide will be posted on Influenza Vaccine Information for Health Professionals (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/flu/hcp/vaccine/) when it is ready. You can sign up to get an email alert by clicking on the red envelope in the top right corner of the web page. The guide will reflect the latest CDC recommendations including additional considerations for vaccinating during COVID-19.

Here are a few known updates for the 2021-22 flu season:

- All 2021-22 products are quadrivalent.
- This season's vaccine contains: A/Victoria (H1N1) or A/Wisconsin (H1N1)-like virus, A/Cambodia (H3N2)-like virus, B/Washington (Victoria lineage)-like virus, B/Phuket (Yamagata lineage)-like virus.
- Flucelvax is now approved for ages 2 years and older.
- When vaccine becomes available, focus on vaccinating pregnant people in their third trimester and children who require two doses. Vaccination of pregnant people has been shown to reduce risk of influenza illness of their infants during the first months of life (a period during which they be too young to receive influenza vaccine). Children that require two doses should get the first dose right away to allow the second dose (which must be administered 4 or more weeks later) to be received by the end of October.

Be aware of acute flaccid myelitis (AFM) symptoms

CDC and MDH are urging providers to watch for symptoms of acute flaccid myelitis (AFM), an uncommon but serious neurologic condition that results in muscles and nerves becoming weak. Most cases occur in children, between August and November. Since CDC began tracking AFM in 2014, 663 cases have been confirmed. On average 2-3 cases of AFM have been confirmed each year in Minnesota, with a high of 11 AFM cases confirmed in 2018.

The majority of AFM patients are previously healthy children who had respiratory symptoms or fever consistent with a viral infection a week or so before they experienced limb weakness. Providers seeing symptoms consistent with AFM should consult an infectious disease physician and a neurologist right away, and quickly report all suspect cases to MDH.

For more on AFM, refer to About Acute Flaccid Myelitis (AFM) (www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/about-afm.html).