

High levels of respiratory viral activity circulating: Information for health care providers

Respiratory viral activity is high across the United States as well as in Minnesota, with associated increases in hospitalizations, outbreaks, and even deaths.

- Influenza has already resulted in more than 50 deaths and over 2,300 people hospitalized.
- Influenza-like illness has contributed to approximately 40 outbreaks in long-term care (LTC) facilities and 900 outbreaks in schools.
- COVID-19 infections remain elevated with corresponding increases in hospitalizations over the past few weeks.
- At its peak, RSV weekly hospitalizations were at almost 200 per week, compared to 40-60 per week during a typical season.
- RSV hospitalizations tend to be predominantly among children and the surge has resulted in a major strain on pediatric units across the state.

Vaccination, antivirals, and other prevention strategies all have an important role in preventing and reducing the severity of influenza and COVID-19.

Band Together to Protect Each Other against flu and COVID-19

One arm at a time. One bandage at a time. Let's band together to help protect ourselves and our communities from serious impacts of flu and COVID-19. Everyone age 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine each year. Everyone age 6 months and older should get their COVID-19 vaccine, and the updated bivalent booster when eligible. [Band Together to Protect Each Other \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/flu/band/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/flu/band/index.html).

COVID-19 bivalent booster fact sheet

A new resource has been developed to provide information to patients about the updated bivalent booster shot. The updated booster helps protect against newer variants of the COVID-19 virus that are currently spreading, specifically the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron variants. Please review the [Why You Should Get an Updated \(Bivalent\) Booster \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/bivalentfs.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/bivalentfs.pdf) fact sheet and share it with your patients.

Preventing COVID-19 vaccine errors

MDH has been seeing an increase in COVID-19 vaccination errors. With multiple formulations of COVID-19 vaccine in use, increasingly complex vaccination schedules and the similarities of labels and cap colors, make sure you differentiate each formulation to prevent administration errors. Consider dot stickers, highlighters, colored rubber bands, separate color bins, etc. to distinguish between each vaccine.

Use CDC's At-A-Glance for a summary of the various formulations:

- [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine At A Glance \(www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/moderna/downloads/vaccine-at-a-glance.pdf\)](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/moderna/downloads/vaccine-at-a-glance.pdf)
- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine At A Glance \(www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/pfizer/downloads/vaccine-at-a-glance.pdf\)](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/pfizer/downloads/vaccine-at-a-glance.pdf)

All staff who administer vaccines need competency-based education and training prior to administering vaccine. To reduce the chance of an error, ensure that the seven rights of vaccine administration have been performed: 1. Right patient; 2. Right time; 3. Right vaccine or diluent; 4. Right dosage; 5. Right route, needle length, and technique; 6. Right site; 7. Right documentation.

If a vaccine error does occur refer to [CDC: Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines: Appendix D. Vaccine administration errors and deviations \(www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us-appendix.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us-appendix.html) and report the error to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\) \(https://vaers.hhs.gov/\)](https://vaers.hhs.gov/).

Pneumococcal vaccine update

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to add clarifying guidance to the recently published pneumococcal recommendations for PCV15 and PCV20 vaccines. Here are the three clarifications.

- Persons 18 years and older who started their pneumococcal vaccination series with a dose of PCV13 and are recommended to receive a second pneumococcal dose (previously PPSV23) may receive either PCV20 or PPSV23 at least 1 year following the PCV13 dose.
- Persons 18 years and older with an immunocompromising condition, a cochlear implant, or cerebrospinal fluid leak who are due for the 5-year booster (following a series of pneumococcal conjugate [PCV13] plus pneumococcal polysaccharide [PPSV23]) may receive either PCV20 or PPSV23.
- Persons ages 65 years and older that have previously received the PCV13 and PPSV23 vaccination series may be considered for an additional dose of PCV20. This decision should be discussed with the individual. Some of the considerations for vaccination include time since the person received the series, current co-morbidities, and age. If a decision to administer PCV20 is made, a dose of PCV20 is recommended at least 5 years after the last pneumococcal vaccine dose.

Measles recommendations published

The ACIP MMR recommendations to include Priorix as a second MMR product have been published. Both MMR II and Priorix MMR products can be used on and off label as previously recommended.

DHS postcard

MDH is partnering with DHS to send out a COVID postcard at the end of January. The postcard will be sent to 5- to 11-year-olds who are enrolled in a Minnesota Health Care Program (MHCP) and are recommended or overdue for a dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Any questions about the postcard can be directed to the MIIC Help Desk at health.miichelp@state.mn.us.

Central Minnesota Immunization Connection (CMIC) closure

Starting in 2023, the CMIC based out of Stearns County will close. For MIIC users in counties from this region (Stearns, Wright, Sherburne, Benton, Pine, Isanti, Mille Lacs, Chisago, and Kanabec), all requests for MIIC support, outreach, user guidance, and training should be directed to the MDH MIIC Help Desk at health.miichelp@state.mn.us.

MIIC User Survey

MIIC is excited to send out their annual MIIC User Survey in February 2023. The survey will be emailed to MIIC users and will cover many of MIIC's features and programs. Please consider filling out the survey as the responses will be used to inform enhancements to MIIC as well as our robust user guidance/training program. Please let us know if you have any questions in the meantime by emailing the MIIC Help Desk at health.miichelp@state.mn.us. Thank you!