

OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIAL GUIDANCE ON HOW FAMILIES CAN KEEP THEIR CHILDREN SAFE FROM COVID-19

Updated May 18, 2022

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Louisiana Department of Health's official recommendation is clear: **vaccinating your children ages 5-17 is the best way to protect them against COVID-19.**

VACCINE & BOOSTER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILDREN

IF YOUR CHILD IS...	THEY CAN RECEIVE THE...	THEY SHOULD RECEIVE THE VACCINE...	SHOULD MY CHILD GET A BOOSTER?
5-11 years old*	Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine	2 doses given 3 weeks apart	Booster shot has been authorized by FDA, awaiting CDC recommendation
12-17 years old**	Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine	2 doses given 3-8 weeks apart	1 booster of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is recommended at least 5 months after the final dose in the primary series

*Vaccines for ages 5-15 are under emergency use authorization (EUA). For ages 16-18, the vaccines have received full approval.

**First booster shots for 12-17 year olds are under emergency use authorization (EUA).

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET YOUR CHILD VACCINATED NOW?

Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to spread in Louisiana. The COVID-19 lull we enjoyed following the Omicron surge earlier this year is starting to reverse itself. While hospitalizations remain low at this time, cases, percent positivity, and emergency department visits for COVID-like illness are all increasing statewide.

According to the latest data from the Kaiser Family Foundation, COVID-19 was the fourth leading cause of death among children ages 5-14 and young people ages 15-24 in January 2022.

Having your child vaccinated against the virus will strengthen their immune system, help prevent them from getting severe COVID-19 symptoms, and could keep them out of the hospital.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS GOING TO SUMMER CAMP OR STARTING SCHOOL IN THE FALL?

You should not wait – make sure your child is up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations now, given the recent increases in COVID-19 cases throughout Louisiana.

WHAT CAN FAMILIES DO TO KEEP CHILDREN UNDER 5 HEALTHY UNTIL THEY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

We know many families are anxiously awaiting the anticipated announcement that the COVID-19 vaccine is available for children under 5, and we have been actively planning for it. In the meantime, families can:

- **Focus on preventative care and wellness.** Keep up with regular pediatric visits and wellness checks.
- **Talk to your pediatrician.** They have the most accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines and when they will be available. It is also important to check on other routine vaccinations.
- **Assess the risk of activities.** Remember: outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities. When in doubt, masking and/or rapid testing can decrease uncertainty. Stay vigilant if your child is immunocompromised or another family member is vulnerable to severe illness.

The federal government is providing free COVID-19 at-home tests. You can order yours at [covidtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov) or call **1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489)**.

WHAT IF I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

That's normal! Talk to your or your child's doctor about what is right for your family. You can also call our **COVID-19 Support Hotline at 1-855-453-0774** to get your questions answered, speak directly with a medical professional, find a vaccine provider or therapeutics near you, and schedule a vaccine appointment or homebound vaccination.