

# IMMUNIZATION COVID-19 UPDATE

ISSUE NO 41 | DECEMBER 22, 2021



## QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

**If I am fully vaccinated and have been infected with COVID-19 after receiving a primary series, can I get a booster?**

Yes. People 16 years of age and older who experience COVID-19 after being fully vaccinated can receive a booster dose. People with known current SARS-CoV-2 infection should defer booster dose vaccination at least until they have recovered from the acute illness (if they had symptoms) and have met the criteria to discontinue isolation.

To discontinue isolation, you must stay home and separated from others for ten full days as your isolation period. Your isolation period ends after the ten full days, as long as you have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of medication, and your symptoms have improved.

- If you are symptomatic, day one is the first full day after your symptoms develop.
- If you test positive but never develop symptoms, day one is the first full day after your positive test. If you develop symptoms after testing positive, your ten-day isolation period starts over.

Current evidence about the optimal timing between SARS-CoV-2 infection and vaccination is insufficient to inform guidance.

COMPLETED  
VACCINE SERIES  
IN LOUISIANA

2,310,607\*

\*4,745,432 total doses  
administered in Louisiana

GOV. EDWARDS  
EXTENDS HEALTH  
EMERGENCY ORDER

Gov. John Bel Edwards has extended Louisiana's public health emergency order related to COVID-19 as the Omicron variant spreads. (Page 2)

EXTENSION OF  
PFIZER PEDIATRIC  
VACCINE  
EXPIRATION DATE

The FDA has extended the ultra-low temperature expiration date for Pfizer pediatric vaccine to nine months. All pediatric doses must be updated in LINKS. (Page 2)

# WEEKLY COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

## Governor John Bel Edwards Extends Louisiana's Public Health Emergency Order as Omicron Variant Spreads



Governor John Bel Edwards has extended Louisiana's public health emergency order related to COVID-19, including a provision allowing all state government agencies to require mask wearing.

Given the fast-spreading Omicron variant, which is now the dominant strain in the United States and Louisiana, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state agencies in the governor's cabinet will begin requiring masks for employees and visitors.

"While vaccines and booster doses are the strongest tools we have in the fight against COVID, public health experts also agree that masks are an important way to slow the spread of the Omicron variant now. This means you should be masking indoors around people who aren't in your household," Edwards said in a statement. "While it is concerning to still see rising cases, as President Joe Biden noted earlier today – we have come a long way since March 2020. Around 50 percent of Louisianans have already been vaccinated and are much more protected against COVID than they have ever been. The more than 460,000 Louisianans who have already taken a booster dose have even stronger protection.

"Now more than ever it is important that everyone gets vaccinated or, if they are eligible, take a COVID booster. The vaccines are safe, effective, and widely available all across Louisiana, and we know from the most recent CDC data that unvaccinated people are ten times more likely to test positive for COVID and 20 times more likely to die from COVID than fully vaccinated people who also have gotten their booster shots. Simply put, one of the riskiest things you can be in Louisiana right now is unvaccinated. You're signing up for the potential of severe illness, hospitalization, or something even worse. We have seen how previous COVID surges have torn through our state and none of us wants to go back to the days of August and September when thousands of people were hospitalized and dying."

While many people are vaccinated, only around a quarter of eligible Louisianans have their booster doses. A Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot increases antibody levels 25-fold against omicron. Similarly, early data show a Moderna booster shot can increase antibody levels 37-fold against omicron. Getting your booster has never been more urgent.

In addition to the governor's public health order, the Louisiana Department of Health on Monday issued revised recommendations and guidance for Louisianans during the holiday season, particularly if they are traveling. These include getting vaccines and boosters, masking indoors around people who aren't in your household and getting tested regularly. In addition, any person who has COVID

symptoms should get tested and stay in quarantine to avoid spreading the illness to others.

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported including fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea. People with COVID-19 symptoms should stay home and get tested.

There are COVID-19 test sites throughout Louisiana.

Visit [ldh.la.gov/covidtesting](https://ldh.la.gov/covidtesting) or call 211 to find a test site near you.

All community-based sites operated by the Louisiana National Guard will be closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day.

For more information on the Omicron variant, visit [cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov).

## Extension of Pfizer Pediatric Vaccine Expiration Dates in LINKS



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has extended the ultra-low temperature (ULT) shelf life of the Pfizer Pediatric vaccine. The Pfizer pediatric vials now technically expire NINE months after the manufacture date printed on the carton and vial (previously six-month expiration date).

As a result, all providers with Pfizer Pediatric vaccines in inventory, or receiving pediatric vaccines, should record the new expiration date in LINKS as occurring NINE months from the printed manufacture date. Be sure to include the printed month as the first month in the nine-month time frame. *Please note: even if you only have refrigerated vaccine in your inventory, you still should update the expiration date in LINKS based on this new guidance.*

Despite this change of the recorded expiration date in LINKS, nothing changes with doses delivered and stored at refrigerated temperatures. While the expiration date needs to be recorded in LINKS, the use-by-date is still 10 weeks once transferred to refrigerated storage.

For the foreseeable future, pediatric vaccines in Louisiana will continue to be delivered refrigerated from our in-state redistribution partner, Morris & Dickson. As a reminder, once the vaccine is stored or transported refrigerated, it CANNOT be moved back to ultra-cold temperature storage.

Printed Manufactured Date	UPDATED Nine-Month Expiration Date
August 2021	April 30, 2022
September 2021	May 31, 2022
October 2021	June 30, 2022
November 2021	July 31, 2022
December 2021	August 31, 2022

The date of expiration always falls on the last day of the month.

## Protect Yourself and Others Against COVID-19 During This Holiday Season

In light of this rapidly evolving situation and because families are traveling and gathering over the next two weeks, LDH is sharing updated public health guidance so that families can celebrate safely.

**To protect yourself, get vaccinated and, if eligible, get boosted.** The COVID-19 vaccine protects against severe outcomes from COVID-19, including hospitalization and death. If you are not yet vaccinated, you are unprotected. While getting the vaccine protects you from a severe outcome, a vaccinated person can still transmit the virus to others.

If you have questions about vaccines, you can speak to a medical professional and learn about vaccination sites near you by calling Louisiana's vaccine hotline at 855-453-0774.

**To reduce transmission, regardless of vaccination status, mask indoors when not with your everyday household.** LDH recommends wearing masks indoors in all public settings. People should consider wearing a mask indoors in private settings as well, especially if you are gathering with individuals at a high risk of severe outcome, which includes older people and those with underlying health conditions. Masks are effective in protecting infection against all of the currently circulating variants.

**Regardless of vaccination status, get tested multiple times.** Get a test before you travel, before a gathering, and upon returning from travel. Remember that COVID-19 tests are snapshots in time.

**For more information on safer ways to celebrate the holidays, go to [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).**



## LOUISIANA COVID-19 VACCINE DEMOGRAPHICS

### SERIES COMPLETED BY RACE:

- **White:** 58.41%
- **Black:** 30.92%
- **American Indian:** 0.4%
- **Asian:** 2.79%
- **Native Hawaiian:** 0.19%
- **Unknown:** 1.37%
- **Other:** 5.92%

### SERIES COMPLETED BY AGE:

- **5-17:** 6.06%
- **18-29:** 13.06%
- **30-39:** 13.43%
- **40-49:** 13.87%
- **50-59:** 16.58%
- **60-69:** 18.5%
- **70+:** 18.5%

- **Female:** 54.13%
- **Male:** 45.61%
- **Unknown:** 0.26%

All breakdowns shown here are for Louisiana residents only. Race data completeness is expected to improve as we continue our outreach with vaccine providers.

## Good Reads

**Can't find a rapid at-home COVID test? Get one free at New Orleans fire stations** – This article talks about how you can find COVID-19 rapid tests at New Orleans fire stations during this week to test for COVID before the holidays.

Read more at [nola.com](https://www.nola.com).

**COVID cases in Louisiana continue to rise as Omicron spreads; weekly totals near September levels** – This article talks about how coronavirus cases in Louisiana continue to rise in Louisiana, compared to levels in September.

Read more at [nola.com](https://www.nola.com).

**Should John Bel Edwards reinstate Louisiana mask mandate? Here's what his health advisers say** – This article talks about what Louisiana health advisers are suggesting about wearing masks due to the fast-spreading Omicron variant.

Read more at [theadvocate.com](https://theadvocate.com).