

COVID-19 Vaccine | Key Messages

Week of December 6, 2021

Omicron

- A new COVID-19 virus variant that contains a large number of mutations has been [classified as a variant of concern and named “Omicron” by the World Health Organization](#).
 - Variant of concern is a variant that causes more severe illness or allows the virus to spread more easily or has other concerning features, and is actively spreading in the U.S.
 - At this time, more data is needed on the transmissibility, disease severity, and vaccine efficacy against this variant.
 - So far, the COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S. have provided good protection against variants circulating in our country.
- The first case in Chicago was confirmed on December 7. As of December 8, Omicron has been detected in more than 20 countries, and 19 states in the U.S.
- Getting vaccinated is the number one way to protect yourself from getting sick, going to the hospital, or dying from COVID-19. Get vaccinated or get a booster if you’re already vaccinated and at or over the age of 18. It will protect you and your community, and help us stop the spread of the virus in Chicago.
- Additionally, you should wear a mask in indoor public settings, wash your hands frequently, and keep physically distancing from others. If you are feeling sick stay home, and follow [CDC](#) and [CDPH](#) recommendations for international and domestic travel.
- For more information on COVID-19 and coronavirus variants, visit:
 - CDPH: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/sars-cov-2-variants.html>
 - IDPH: <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/data/variants.html>
 - CDC: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#variant-proportions>

Protect Chicago At Home – Appointments now available on weekends

- Everyone age 5 and up is eligible for in-home vaccination through [Protect Chicago At Home](#). Up to 10 people can be vaccinated per household.
- Protect Chicago At Home now operates seven days a week. Appointment times are Monday through Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- In-home vaccination offers a choice between the pediatric Pfizer (5-11), Pfizer (12+), and Johnson & Johnson (18+) primary and booster doses.
- Everyone 5 and up is eligible for a \$100 visa gift card after receiving their primary vaccine doses at home. Booster doses do not qualify.
- All gift cards for at-home appointments are delivered by mail, not at the time of the appointment.
- Call (312) 746-4835 to make an appointment or register at chicago.gov/athome

Booster doses

- All Chicagoans age 18 and older are encouraged to get their COVID-19 booster dose as we head into the winter months and holiday season, especially seniors and

people with underlying medical conditions who are at higher risk of severe complications.

- Those who received a J&J/Janssen vaccine, should receive a booster dose at least two months after their initial dose.
- Those who received a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine series, should get a booster at least six months after completing the vaccine series.
- While all three COVID-19 vaccines continue to be very effective in preventing hospitalization and death, booster doses provide extra protection against COVID-19. Booster doses do a good job of strengthening protection against COVID-19 that may have started to wane after initial vaccination.
- Chicagoans can get a booster dose at sites across the city – in hospitals, physicians' offices, local pharmacies, pop-up clinics hosted by the City, and more. For more information and to find your vaccine, go to [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](https://chicago.gov/COVIDvax).
- Booster doses do not qualify for incentive programs, including the \$100 gift card promotion.

Holiday gatherings guidance

- The COVID-19 vaccines are by far the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the virus, and anyone who isn't vaccinated should get one as soon as possible to be protected for the holidays. That includes children now that 5-11 year olds are now eligible for the Pfizer vaccine.
- Fully vaccinated people can gather with others who have been fully vaccinated without restrictions.
- The indoor mask mandate for public settings remains in effect for Chicago and Illinois. While this applies in public settings, if you are gathering with people outside your immediate circle or with people who are medically fragile, you should consider wearing a mask.
- If you are not fully vaccinated you should consider not attending gatherings over the holidays. If you plan to do so, we encourage you to take a COVID test before the gathering, as well as mask and social distance when possible.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/celebrations.html>
- If you are sick or experiencing any COVID- or flu-like symptoms you should NOT attend any gatherings, even if you are vaccinated.
- Fully vaccinated people can travel for the holidays. Individuals who are not vaccinated should consider delaying travel until fully vaccinated. If traveling is a necessity, unvaccinated people should follow the [CDPH Travel Advisory guidelines](#).
- These guidelines are in place to ensure safety among families during the Holidays. Do your part, and encourage others to protect themselves and their loved ones by getting vaccinated. To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and booster doses, visit chi.gov/covidvax.

Pediatric vaccinations

- All children ages 5 to 11 are eligible to receive Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines.
- Although there have been fewer COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations among children, the long-term effects of a pediatric COVID-19 case can be serious and last months. The best way to protect children against COVID-19 and its variants is to get them vaccinated.
- The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is an mRNA vaccine that requires two doses, 21 days apart. The vaccine for those age 5 to 11 uses the same formula but is one-third the

adult dose. Adolescents over the age of 12 are recommended the same dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine as adults.

- Like other pediatric vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine was thoroughly tested before being recommended. Clinical trials with thousands of children 5 years and older showed the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to be safe and effective. Millions of adolescents in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines under the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.
- Like adults, youth may experience short-term side effects – but it's a sign the body is building protection from COVID-19. Most common side effects include soreness at the injection site, feeling tired, or having a headache. These temporary side effects should go away in a few days. Children may experience fewer side effects than adolescents or young adults.
- No long-term side effects have been detected. There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines impact puberty or reproductive development in any way.
- Vaccines for anyone, including kids, are offered at no cost – no insurance or government ID is needed.
- COVID-19 vaccines for individuals of all ages are widely available. Talk to your family health care provider or find other locations near you at chi.gov/COVIDvax or by calling the City of Chicago COVID-19 helpline at (312) 746-4835.

City of Chicago Family Vaccination Clinics

- CDPH is hosting family vaccination clinics at City Colleges of Chicago.
- All clinics offer pediatric Pfizer (5-11) vaccines, as well as Pfizer (12+) and J&J (18+) primary and booster doses to all Chicagoans.
- All clinics will be open 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Registration is encouraged, but walk-ins are welcome. Register at chi.gov/COVIDvax or by calling (312) 746-4835.
 - Saturday, December 11 – Kennedy-King College, 6301 S Halsted St.
 - Sunday, December 12 – Olive-Harvey College, 10001 S Woodlawn Ave.
 - Saturday, December 18 – Truman College, 1145 W Wilson Ave.
 - Sunday, December 19 – Malcolm X College, 1900 W Jackson Blvd.
 - Saturday, January 8 – Truman College, 1145 W Wilson Ave.
 - Sunday, January 9 – Malcolm X College, 1900 W Jackson Blvd.