

COVID-19 Key Messages

Week of September 26, 2022

Updated COVID-19 Vaccine (Bivalent Booster)

- Federal health officials have authorized the updated COVID-19 **bivalent booster** designed specifically to target the Omicron subvariants BA.4/5.
 - This bivalent booster mixes two versions of protections against the original coronavirus strain and the newly BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron subvariants.
 - The bivalent booster generates a **stronger immune response against current variants** and **potentially broadens the protection against future variants**.
 - The Pfizer bivalent booster is authorized for people ages 12+.
 - The Moderna bivalent booster is authorized for people ages 18+.
 - The updated COVID-19 bivalent booster is administered as a single dose.
- Everyone aged 12 and up who has completed a primary vaccine series should receive a bivalent booster **two months** after their last primary series dose or their last booster shot, regardless of the primary vaccine type they received or previous booster doses.
 - A complete primary series of vaccines is required (**two doses of Pfizer/Moderna/Novavax or one dose of Johnson & Johnson**) before receiving a bivalent booster.
- **The bivalent booster for children ages 5-11 years will SOON become available.** Meanwhile, children in this group should receive a booster dose of the **Pfizer vaccine** at **least five months** after the second dose of the primary series.
- Bivalent COVID-19 vaccine boosters are widely available in Chicago. For those who need help finding a nearby location to receive the bivalent booster, [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) is a free online service that you can use to search for pharmacies and other providers. You can also access [Chicago.gov/CovidVax](https://www.chicago.gov/CovidVax) or call CDPH's COVID-19 call center at **312-746-4835** for more information or to [schedule your vaccine](#).
- You can call or visit your local pharmacy's website for more information on availability. More than 130 pharmacy locations in Chicago have received the updated vaccine:
 - [CVS](#)
 - [Jewel-Osco](#)
 - [Walgreens](#)
 - [Mariano's](#)
 - [Walmart](#)
- **Protect Chicago At Home.** CDPH's in-home vaccination program offers the updated COVID-19 vaccine and primary doses for anyone age 6 months and up. Up to 10 people can be vaccinated at a time. Appointments for homebound individuals, those aged 65 and up, and those living in specific zip codes will be prioritized. Make an at-home appointment at [Chicago.gov/AtHome](https://www.chicago.gov/AtHome) or by calling 312-746-4835.
- CDPH will continue to host [Family Vaccination Clinics at City Colleges of Chicago](#) through November. These events will offer [Flu and COVID-19 Vaccines](#) with Pfizer and Moderna for children 6 months old and up and [Updated Bivalent Booster](#) doses to all eligible Chicagoans.
 - Clinics will be open from **9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**
 - Registration is recommended and is available at [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](https://www.chicago.gov/COVIDvax). Vaccinations will be held Saturday, Oct. 1, at:

- [Kennedy King College, 6301 S. Halsted St.](#)
 - Walk-ins are also welcome as space allows.
- CDPH is partnering with alderpersons and organizations across all 50 wards to provide **flu/COVID-19 vaccination clinics** this fall that will include the updated COVID-19 vaccine. This includes clinics in partnership with the Department of Family and Support Services at locations serving seniors and other congregate settings. View the full schedule and find an event near you at [Chicago.gov/VaxCalendar](https://chicago.gov/VaxCalendar) – events will be added as they are confirmed.
- For frequently asked questions, please visit [Chicago.gov/Boost](https://chicago.gov/Boost).
- Federal health officials have advised that it is safe to receive both COVID-19 vaccines, including the updated bivalent booster, and the flu shot or other vaccines simultaneously.

Chicago's COVID-19 Risk Level is LOW

- Cook County is at the Low COVID-19 Community Level based on the national metrics of the CDC.
 - The CDC's measurement of Cook County's hospitalization data for Community Levels reflects the burden on the whole federally defined Health Service Area, which includes Cook, Lake, DuPage, and McHenry Counties.
- Mask guidance for Low Level:
 - Consider wearing masks in indoor public places and public transportation if at risk for severe disease outcomes.
 - While all masks provide some protection, properly fitted N95 and KN95 masks offer the highest level of protection.
 - Masks may be required in certain healthcare settings, based on the risk of transmission (regardless of Community Level).
- Other recommended COVID-19 mitigations:
 - Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, get tested if you are experiencing COVID-like symptoms, follow quarantine and isolation guidelines, and stay home if you are sick.
- CDPH uses the CDC's [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) to gauge the level of risk here in Chicago.
 - CDC releases new COVID-19 Community Level data every Friday.
 - Levels can be low, medium, or high and are determined by the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area, new COVID-19 admissions, and hospital beds used by COVID-19 patients.
 - More information is on <https://chi.gov/coviddash>.