

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 23, 2025

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**KEY POINTS FOR MEDIA:**

- IDPH has released its immunization guidance for the fall respiratory virus season. [Click here for a summary.](#)
- IDPH Director Vohra has also issued a standing order to make it easier for residents to get COVID-19 vaccines through pharmacies and other clinical settings.
- IDPH also endorses CDC immunization schedules from August 7, 2025 for routine, non-seasonal immunizations for children and adults. Amid continued disruption and confusion at the federal level, the August 7 immunization schedules reflect the best available data and research for immunizations.

## **IDPH issues fall vaccine guidance and COVID-19 standing order to ensure access for Illinoisans**

*State adopts Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee's (IL-IAC) science-based recommendations; IDPH also reaffirms support for existing vaccine schedules as federal vaccine panel's credibility falters*

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today released [new fall respiratory virus vaccine guidance](#) and issued a [statewide standing order](#) to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Additionally, for routine, non-seasonal vaccines, IDPH recommends that healthcare providers continue to follow the CDC immunization schedules for [children](#) and [adults](#) issued as of August 7, 2025, which are based on years of science, research, data, and best practices. These measures are being taken in accordance with the [executive order issued by Governor Pritzker earlier this month](#).

The [fall vaccine guidance](#) was adopted by IDPH after robust discussion and votes made by the Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee (IL-IAC) on September 22, 2025. The IL-IAC is composed of a group of 20 highly qualified experts spanning epidemiology, infectious diseases, pediatrics, family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, nursing, pharmacy, and public health.

These actions are necessary because the federal government is no longer following its rigorous scientific review processes for vaccine-related decisions. The CDC's gold-standard practices, followed for decades, have prevented serious illness and saved millions of lives nationwide.

"At a time when the federal government is abdicating its responsibility to provide clear, science-informed guidance, Illinois is stepping up," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "Illinois will continue to empower providers and families across our state with the information and access they need to guard against illness and disease."

"All Illinoisans, including concerned parents and health care providers, deserve credible, transparent, science-based vaccine guidance," **said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra**. "IDPH's recommendations, made in consultation with our Immunization Advisory Committee, will ensure that residents can protect themselves and their family members this upcoming respiratory season. In addition, the accompanying standing order will allow residents access to COVID-19 vaccine in local pharmacies and other health care settings."

After receiving recommendations from the IL-IAC, examining guidance from medical specialty societies, and reviewing Illinois and national respiratory illness data, IDPH issued the following vaccination [guidance](#) for the 2025-2026 respiratory illness season:

- Flu vaccination is recommended for all people ages 6 months and older.
- RSV immunization is recommended for:
  - All pregnant people during weeks 32 through 36 of pregnancy.
  - All infants under the age of 8 months without maternal RSV vaccine protection entering their first RSV season.
  - Children ages 8 months through 19 months who are at increased [risk for severe RSV disease](#).
  - Adults ages 50 years through 74 years at increased [risk of severe RSV disease](#).
  - All adults ages 75 years and older.
- COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for:
  - All children ages 6 months through 23 months.
  - Children ages 2 years through 17 years who have at least one [underlying risk factor](#), who have weakened immune systems, who have never been previously vaccinated for COVID-19, who live in congregate settings or live in households with those at risk for severe COVID-19.
  - Children ages 2 years through 17 years without underlying risk factors whose parents/guardians want them to get a COVID-19 vaccine.
  - All pregnant people and those who are planning pregnancy, those who are postpartum (after pregnancy), or during lactation.
  - All adults 18 years and older.

"The committee members had a robust discussion that included high quality scientific evidence and clear public health questions," said Marielle Fricchione, MD, IL-IAC Chair and Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Rush Medical College. "I'm grateful to Governor Pritzker and Director Vohra for allowing IAC to do what was right for Illinois by applying best practices with an 'evidence to recommendations' framework to ensure broad access to safe and effective vaccines."

Last season, flu vaccination reduced the risk of hospitalization by up to 78% for children, COVID-19 vaccines cut hospitalizations among seniors nearly in half, and RSV protection

prevented almost 90% of infant hospitalizations. These results underscore the life-saving importance of vaccination this fall.

Along with these [recommendations](#), Director Vohra issued a [standing order](#) allowing residents who need to get a COVID-19 vaccine to have access in pharmacies and other clinical settings. The standing order will facilitate health care providers in pharmacies and other clinical settings to administer COVID-19 vaccines in accordance with IDPH's recommendations. Federal insurance programs, fully-insured plans subject to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and state-regulated insurance programs will cover COVID-19 shots. In recognition of the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine in preventing serious illness, most private [insurers](#) have also indicated their intention to continue covering the COVID-19 vaccine.

For other **routine, non-seasonal, vaccinations**, IDPH continues to recommend that providers follow the August 7, 2025, CDC Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule and the Adult Immunization Schedules located on [IDPH's website](#). This schedule does not include today's updated COVID-19 recommendations and providers are encouraged to follow the State of Illinois' recommendations. IDPH will issue updated immunization schedule recommendations as appropriate should there be new federal or medical specialty society guidance for review or receive alternate recommendations from the Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee.

As the federal vaccine panel review process continues to cause confusion and uncertainty, this measure will ensure continuity and clarity for vaccine administration, especially for the childhood vaccine schedule. Through this measure, Illinois is also affirming recommendations that are based on years of science, research, data, and best practices.

"For pediatricians and for the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP), a child's health and safety always come first. So, we are deeply grateful to the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Immunization Advisory Committee for their leadership, expertise and dedication to science-based recommendations," said Michelle Barnes, MD, FAAP, President, ICAAP. "Today's guidance not only provides answers during a confusing time but helps strengthen disease prevention and immunization practices across Illinois, which are vital components of pediatric health care. "

"The physicians of the Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS) commend Governor Pritzker, IDPH Director and ISMS member Dr. Sameer Vohra, and, especially, the Immunization Advisory Committee, for supporting medical science," said Richard C. Anderson, MD, President of the Illinois State Medical Society. "These vaccine recommendations provide clear guidance to patients, physicians and payers. As we enter the fall respiratory virus season, it's important for children and adults to get timely immunizations to protect themselves, their loved ones, and the community from these easily transmissible diseases. It's also essential for everyone to stay up to date on all recommended vaccinations to protect against other serious illnesses. And, as always, if individuals have concerns, they should talk to their physicians."

“Illinois is stepping up at a critical moment,” said Tom Hughes, Executive Director of the Illinois Public Health Association. “With federal guidance creating uncertainty, the Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee and the Department of Public Health are providing the clarity and leadership our residents and providers need. Their recommendations keep prevention front and center, ensure continued access to COVID-19 vaccines, and reaffirm Illinois’ commitment to protecting community health. We encourage all Illinoisans to get their updated vaccines to protect themselves, their families, and their communities.”

As the fall respiratory virus season begins, IDPH’s [Seasonal Respiratory Illness Dashboard](#) is designed to provide important information on COVID-19, flu, and RSV activity in Illinois.

Illinois typically experiences a peak in flu, RSV and COVID-19 activity in December with flu often having a second peak in February. Given the critical importance of getting vaccinated prior to the surge in respiratory viral activity, IDPH also provides the public a [Vaccine Locator Dashboard](#) with information on where to find publicly funded vaccines.

As Illinois heads into peak viral season, IDPH urges residents to get vaccinated early and speak with their health care provider if they have any questions. Vaccine locations are available through the IDPH Vaccine Locator Dashboard, [local health departments](#), pharmacies, and health care providers. Residents may also track the status of the [flu](#) and [COVID-19](#) vaccine coverage in their counties to make informed choices on the protection they need to take this season.

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