

Immunization rates decline for school-age kids

Immunization coverage data shows a troubling drop in the percentage of students fully vaccinated with the vaccines required for school entry since the start of the pandemic, leaving many more students vulnerable to vaccine preventable disease. You can view the [School Immunization Data \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/stats/school/\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/stats/school/) to look at immunization coverage and exemption rates at the school, school district, and county levels.

Statewide coverage levels for kindergarten students dropped more than 3 percentage points since the start of the pandemic. For example, this represents roughly 5,000 additional kindergarten students missing MMR vaccines since the start of the pandemic. Rates of in-progress or missing doses have nearly doubled since the start of the pandemic. Students in the “in-progress or missing doses” category may be behind on their vaccinations or may not have submitted all their immunization documentation to their school. Ensuring school-age children get back on track is critical for broad protection against vaccine preventable disease outbreaks. Consider sending reminders, or calling families into the clinic, earlier this year to avoid a rush later this summer.

Adolescent vaccine reminder postcard

MDH will be sending out reminder postcards about adolescent vaccinations (Tdap, meningococcal, HPV, and COVID-19) in early June. This postcard will be sent to families of 11-12-year-olds as of Jan. 1 who were overdue or recommended for a dose of MenACWY, Tdap, HPV, or COVID-19 vaccines as of May 1. These reminders may increase calls for immunization visits. We encourage providers to spread the word about the postcards to clinic staff and make sure they have enough vaccine on hand. If you have any questions, contact the MIIC Help Desk at health.miichelp@state.mn.us.

Are Your Kids Ready?

Recent updates to [Are Your Kids Ready? When to Get Vaccines, Birth to 16 Years \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/readykidshento.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/readykidshento.pdf) include, clarifying the catch-up requirements for the DTaP and Polio vaccines, specifying Meningococcal ACWY vaccine is the meningococcal vaccine required for school, and expanding the age range listed for the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you link to the document on your website, make sure it is to the updated version dated 1/2022. You can also find translated versions in Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Think measles: before and after travel

As COVID-19 restrictions change and more individuals are traveling, it is important to be aware that measles outbreaks are occurring in other parts of the world including many countries in Africa, Europe, and Asia. It is only a matter of time before travelers bring measles home from areas of the world where measles is still very common. Health care providers can help minimize the spread of measles by:

- Assessing MMR status in patients who are planning to travel internationally. Additional information on measles vaccination in travelers can be found at [CDC: Plan for Travel \(www.cdc.gov/measles/plan-for-travel.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/plan-for-travel.html).

- Asking patients with febrile rash illness about any recent travel (domestic or international).
- Isolating suspected measles cases and promptly report to MDH at 1-877-676-5414 (toll-free) or 651-201-5414, collecting specimens for PCR and submit per [Lab Testing for Measles at the MDH Public Health Laboratory \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/hcp/labtesting.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/hcp/labtesting.html). Advise patient to stay at home with no visitors until PCR results are back.

For more information, including a Think Measles poster visit [Measles \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/).

Immunization Champion Award

Nominations are open until June 27. Visit [AIM Champion Awards \(www.immunizationmanagers.org/about-aim/awards/champion-awards/\)](http://www.immunizationmanagers.org/about-aim/awards/champion-awards/) for more information and to download the nomination packet. Submit nominations via email to Melody Doan at MDH at melody.doan.contractor@state.mn.us.

COVID update

COVID-19 boosters recommended for children 5-11 years old

The FDA authorized a single COVID-19 booster dose for children 5-11 years and CDC provided recommendations for the booster to be given at least 5 months after the Pfizer vaccination primary series, and at least 3 months for those with certain immunocompromising conditions. Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is currently the only authorized product for children 5-17 years. For details on the updated recommendations refer to [CDC's Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Approved or Authorized in the United States \(www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html). While booster provide added protection for children, many children remain unvaccinated. Continue efforts to reach out to families that have unvaccinated children. Vaccination provides protection against hospitalization.

Recommendations strengthened for second COVID-19 booster shots

CDC urges a second booster for people 50 years or older and people 12 years or older with certain immunocompromising conditions. This is prompted by the growing cases of COVID-19 and its serious impact on older and immunocompromised individuals. CDC also recommends that people 18-49 years who received the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine for their primary and booster dose receive a second booster dose. Give the second booster at least 4 months after their first. For details on CDC's recommendations refer to the following media statement: [CDC Strengthens Recommendations and Expands Eligibility for COVID-19 Booster Shots \(www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0519-covid-booster-acip.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0519-covid-booster-acip.html).

MIIC webinar series

MIIC is hosting a four-part webinar series on consecutive Thursdays from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. starting May 26 to June 6. Registration is not required. Staff will cover several aspects of MIIC and will include time for questions. For questions or help accessing the meeting information and links to join contact health.miichelp@state.mn.us.