



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **IDPH Endorses Federal Authorization of COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Dose for Children 5 through 11 Years**

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today that it supports yesterday’s recommendation by the CDC of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 booster dose for children aged 5 to 11 years old. IDPH issued an advisory to vaccine providers throughout the state endorsing the booster for children 5 through 11 years of age at least five months after completion of a primary series with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, following the emergency use authorization this week by the FDA and the recommendation of the CDC.

“We encourage every parent or guardian of children five and older to consider a booster vaccination for their eligible child,” said IDPH Director Amaal Tokars. “And if your children have not yet received their primary dose, it’s not too late to start now. Especially with cases rising throughout the state, everyone who is eligible for vaccination should be taking advantage of the opportunity to get vaccinated and boosted. Vaccination remains the strongest way to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19.”

In recommending the booster dose for children aged 5 to 11, the CDC noted that since the pandemic began, more than 4.8 million children ages 5 through 11 have been diagnosed with COVID-19, 15,000 have been hospitalized and, tragically, over 180 have died.

As cases increase across the country, a booster dose will safely help restore and enhance protection against severe disease, the CDC said. Public health officials said that while COVID-19 tends to be less severe in children than adults, the omicron wave has seen more kids getting sick with the disease and being hospitalized. In addition, children may also experience longer term effects, such as long Covid syndrome, even following initially mild disease. These vaccines, which were authorized for children in November 2021, help protect children from both serious complications and long Covid syndrome.

Federal authorities are currently considering authorization of a COVID-19 vaccine for children under 5.

Since the COVID-19 vaccine became available to the public, millions of eligible adults and children across the state of Illinois have received their COVID-19 vaccine or booster dose. Illinois remains among the highest in the Midwest for its vaccination rates, with more than two thirds of the population fully vaccinated.

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More than 22 million vaccines have been administered in Illinois and among children 5 to 11, more than 40% have at least one dose; more than 36 percent are fully vaccinated. Of the total population, more than 76% has received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose; more than 69% of Illinois' total population is fully vaccinated; and 52% of the vaccinated population is boosted according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data indicates that the risk of hospitalization and severe outcomes from COVID-19 is much higher for unvaccinated people than for those who are up to date on their vaccinations.

To find a COVID-19 vaccination location near you, go to [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov).

In addition, the federal government has established a website that provides an all-purpose toolkit that provides information on how to obtain masks, treatment, vaccines and testing resources for all areas of the country at: <https://www.covid.gov/>.

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