

IMMUNIZATION COVID-19 Update

October 27, 2022 | Issue 83



Question of the Week

What is v-safe?



V-safe is a smartphone app from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that provides personalized and confidential health check-ins via text messages and web surveys so you can quickly and easily share with CDC how you or your dependent feel after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Participation in v-safe helps CDC monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines for everyone.

V-safe will soon add a monkeypox module to provide similar information to CDC and to those who get a monkeypox shot. Based on our experience with v-safe for COVID-19, promotion and encouraging v-safe enrollment at the vaccine delivery site is the best way to make vaccine recipients aware of the app.

To understand and assess people's willingness and perceived barriers to using v-safe, LDH has developed a short survey. We encourage you to offer the survey to immunization managers at local clinics who are administering monkeypox vaccine. The survey can be found here: <https://redcap.link/dc83ux75. >

This survey is anonymous, and data collected will assist LDH in the development of promotional efforts. The survey will close today, October 27. Thank you for your participation.

CDC adds COVID-19 vaccines to childhood and adult immunization schedules

This week, CDC's [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#) voted to add authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccines to the 2023 childhood, adolescent and adult immunization schedules and Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.

VFC is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay. Children who are eligible for VFC vaccines are entitled to receive those vaccines recommended by CDC.

With the free federal COVID-19 vaccination and treatment efforts soon ending, the decision by ACIP ensures these vaccines – as well as all routine childhood vaccines – will remain free of charge to families whose parents choose to have them vaccinated. This is especially important in Louisiana where an estimated 69.6% percent of children ages 0-18 are eligible for vaccines through the VFC program.

As a reminder, and to address some misinformation that is spreading, COVID-19 vaccinations are not mandated by the State of Louisiana for children, adolescents or adults. Additionally, COVID-19 shots are not included on the list of required immunizations to attend school.

Shots required for school entry in Louisiana can be found [here](#) and are determined through state legislative action and approval. Of course, students can participate in school without the "required" immunizations if their parent or legal guardian provides a written dissent for any reason. CDC's and LDH's recommended immunization schedules are not the same as Louisiana's school entry requirements. For example, vaccinations for HPV, the flu and other diseases are included on CDC's and LDH's recommended schedules but are not included in the Louisiana school vaccination entry requirements.

CDC's online flu-tracking dashboard now available

Over the course of the 2022–2023 flu season, CDC will share weekly flu vaccination data and coverage estimates using existing and new data sources on its weekly [National Flu Vaccination Dashboard](#). Flu vaccine manufacturers have projected administration of as many as 183.5 million doses of flu vaccine in the U.S. during this year's flu season.

Earlier in October, the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) kicked off the 2022–2023 flu vaccination season with the [NFID Influenza/Pneumococcal Disease News Conference](#). During the event, leading infectious disease experts from NFID and CDC emphasized the importance of flu vaccination, and reminded providers to encourage their patients to get up to date on other routine immunizations, including pneumococcal vaccination.

Flu vaccine coverage estimates for last season can be found on [FluVaxView](#). Louisiana flu reports can be found [here](#).

State of Vaccination Confidence Insights Report for monkeypox published

CDC has published a special [Monkeypox State of Vaccine Confidence Insights Report](#) which emphasizes major themes influencing vaccine hesitancy and uptake, categorized by their level and type of threat to vaccine confidence, degree of spread and at-risk populations. These themes include:

Concerns and questions about the availability, safety and effectiveness of the monkeypox vaccine.

Questions about monkeypox, including its origin, symptoms, how it spreads and if there is a vaccine for it.

Concerns about the spread of monkeypox in the LGBTQ+ community and especially the impact the spread might have on this community, including increased stigma.

By examining how Americans think and feel, social processes, and the practical issues around vaccination, the Insights Report seeks to identify emerging issues of misinformation, disinformation and places where intervention efforts can positively affect vaccine confidence across the U.S.

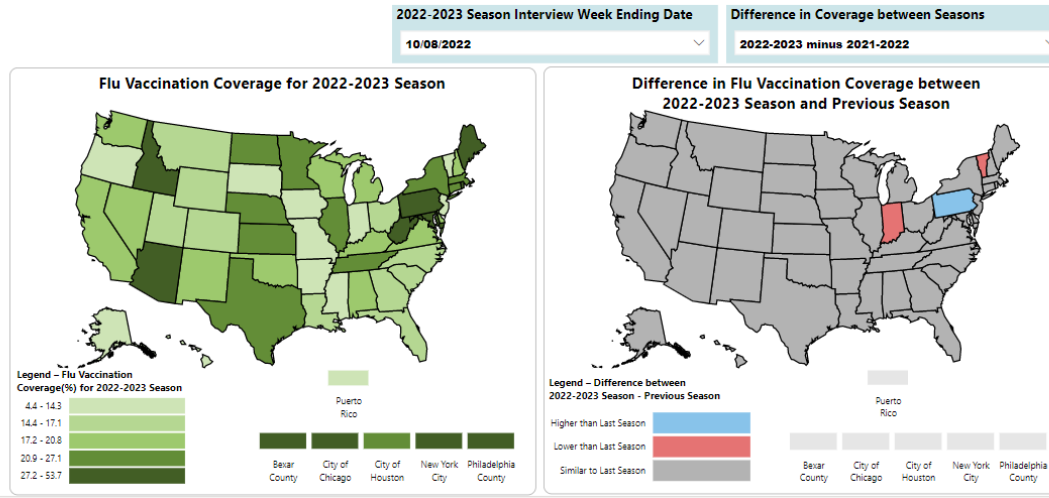
Flu vaccination rates for children to be added to CDC dashboard

Beginning on Friday, October 28, flu vaccination rates for children by state will be added to [CDC's Weekly Flu Vaccination Dashboard](#). The map below shows a comparison between vaccination coverage for children ages 6 months to 17 years

by jurisdiction between the current flu season and last year's season. The data are current up to October 8, 2022.

Figure 2C. Weekly Cumulative Influenza Vaccination Coverage and Comparison between 2022-2023 and Three Previous Seasons, by Jurisdiction, Children 6 Months-17 Years, United States**
Data Source: NIS-Flu

Data are current through October 8, 2022



CDC: Congenital syphilis cases in the U.S. skyrocketed during the pandemic

In an article published by the PEW Trust, CDC reported cases of congenital syphilis in the U.S. climbed by 184% between 2017 and 2021. Although the increase began in the years leading up to the pandemic, it increased by nearly 28% in 2021 alone, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“But that’s only one element of an explosive rise in sexually transmitted infections, known as STIs, which one expert in the field describes as an ‘out-of-control pandemic’ that began in the 2010s and became super-charged during the COVID-19 pandemic,” wrote PEW.

Experts in public health say COVID-19 contributed to the rise in sexually transmitted infections by preventing people from getting routine health care, where STI screenings can occur. It also siphoned public health workers from STI work to focus on COVID-19.

New COVID-19 vaccine ads from HHS target "high risk" communities

CNN is reporting that the federal government will release new ads promoting COVID-19 vaccines this week. The new campaign targets specific communities that have had a slow uptake of the updated shots.

Black audiences are encouraged to get vaccinated in the "On Point" video, released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on Monday.

A Spanish-language ad titled "No te pierdas el juego" also started airing Monday, targeting Latino audiences. An English version of the ad, the title of which translates to "Don't Miss the Game," is scheduled for release next month during the FIFA World Cup.

"The new television ads send an urgent message to communities at high risk of severe illness from COVID that the updated vaccine is the best tool we have against hospitalization and death," said Sarah Lovenheim, HHS assistant secretary for public affairs in an email to CNN on Monday.

"We have seen COVID infections increase in prior winters, and it does not have to be that way this year. We now have updated COVID-19 vaccines to protect you against the Omicron strain," she said.

HHS also released two radio ads Monday targeting rural communities: a football-themed ad called "Can't-Miss Moments" and a country music-themed ad called "Feel Good Country." On Wednesday, the agency will release radio ads in seven languages, titled "In Agreement," targeting Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

As of October 13, 2022, there are 67 (2.1%) counties, districts, or territories with a high COVID-19 Community Level, 583 (18.1%) counties with a medium Community Level, and 2,567 (79.7%) counties with a low Community Level.

Compared with the previous week, this represents a minor decrease (-0.8 percentage points) in the number of high-level counties, a moderate decrease (-2.2 percentage points) in the number of medium-level counties, and a moderate increase (+3.0 percentage points) in the number of low-level counties.

To check COVID-19 Community Levels in Louisiana, [visit the COVID Data Tracker](#). To learn the recommended prevention measures based on your area's COVID-19 Community Level, visit [COVID-19 Community Level and COVID-19 Prevention](#).

La.Immuization@la.gov