

IMMUNIZATION Update

November 17, 2022 | Issue 86



Question of the Week

Is it safe to be around family this holiday season?



The answer is yes, it can be safe if the proper precautions are taken. During the first week of November 2022, the Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) reported that 10.49% of patient visits in Louisiana were due to influenza-like illness. This percentage is more than double the regional baseline of 3.9%.

One way we can prepare for this rise is by taking advantage of the flu vaccine.

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. It is also recommended to receive the newly authorized bivalent COVID-19 booster in conjunction with the flu shot. For people who have already received both the flu shot and the updated COVID-19 booster, here are some additional protections against the flu and COVID-19:

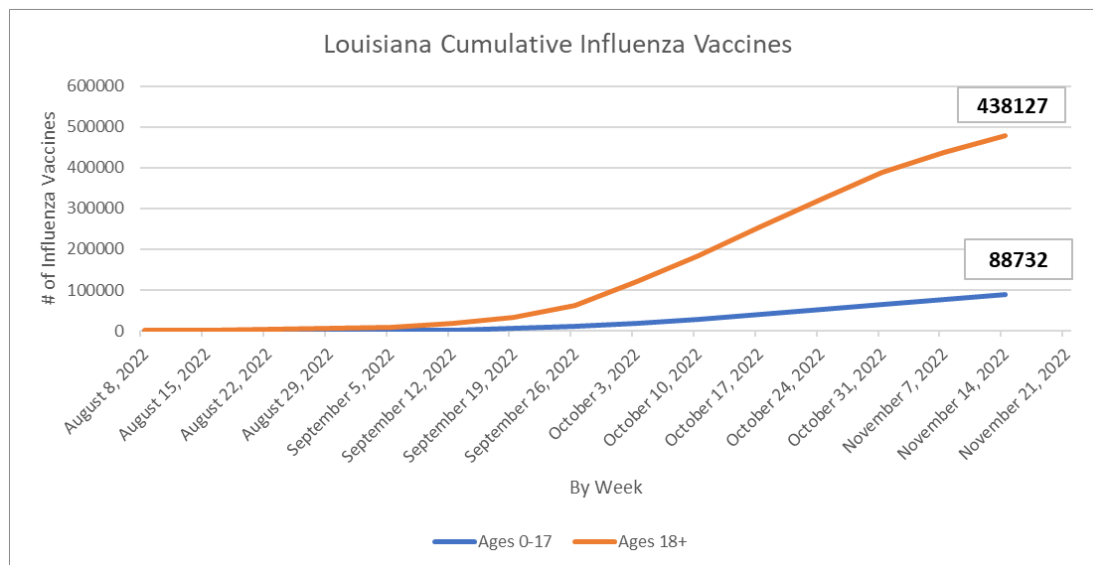
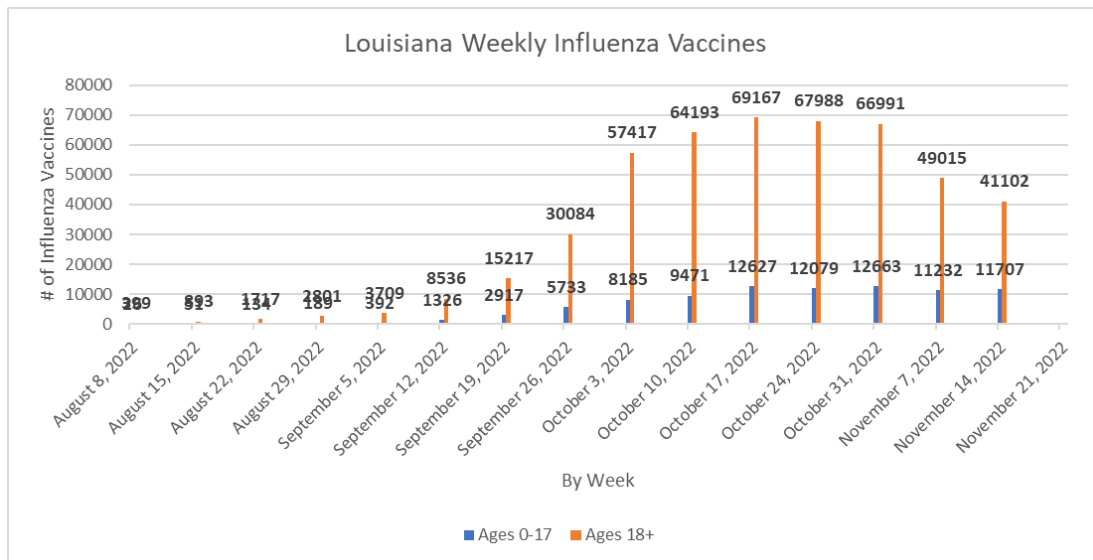
- Wear a mask when possible.
- Frequently wash hands.
- Avoid large crowds.
- If you're exhibiting any cold-like symptoms stay home and/or self-isolate.

- Have guests take a preliminary COVID-19 test before gathering.

[Click here](#) for more strategies on how to stay healthy and safe during the holiday season.

Cumulative 2022–23 influenza vaccinations statewide:

1. Flu vaccines given to individuals aged 0–17 years: 88,732
2. Flu vaccinations given to individuals aged 18+ years: 479,229



Vax matters podcast: Top vaccine myths



Be immune from misinformation with the Office of Public Health's Vax Matters podcast. Listen to the experts discuss all things vaccine, from smallpox to COVID-19. We hear about vaccines every day, but what do we really know about them? The Vax Matters podcast provides listeners with the truths behind immunization from all angles.

The most recent episode (released November 2) discusses the top myths we often hear about vaccines. Dr. David Holcombe, one of the regional medical directors for the Office of Public Health, is our guest expert for this conversation. Episodes are available on most major podcast platforms. Click here to listen now: [Apple](#), [Spotify](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Stitcher](#), [Amazon](#), [Audible](#)

Pfizer bivalent single-dose vials for people 12+

On November 14, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) opened ordering to jurisdictional and federal entity administration partners for a limited amount of single-dose vials of the updated (bivalent) Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for people 12 years of age and older. All COVID-19 providers should expect LINKS ordering for this product to begin the week after Thanksgiving.

This limited introduction of single-dose vials is designed to allow partners to offer the updated COVID-19 vaccines in more places, such as physicians' offices or mobile clinics that may not have the capacity or demand to keep multi-dose vials of COVID-19 vaccine on hand. This is the latest step in improving ease of access for COVID-19 vaccines and creates the potential for more equitable availability of this lifesaving product.

Storage and handling

This new Pfizer presentation is the same bivalent booster vaccine for 12 years and older, with updated single-dose packaging. Therefore all storage and handling requirements remain the same. Please [click here](#) to see the attached message from the Administration for Strategic Preparedness & Response (ASPR) regarding


ordering, distribution, storage and handling, and other important information about this product.

Single-dose vial information

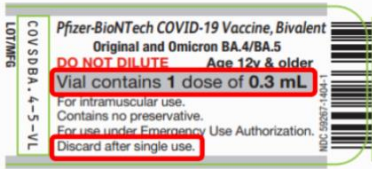
- 10 0.3mL single-dose vials per carton
- Minimum direct order quantity: 50 doses/5 cartons
- No diluent required
- No ancillary kits; low dead volume syringes not required
- Can be stored in ULT freezer until expiry date; in refrigerator, can be stored up to 10 weeks within the expiry period
- NDC: 59267-1404-02

Single Dose Vial Overview: DO NOT DILUTE / 12 years and older

New!



**BIVALENT
Booster Dose
Single Dose Vial**



Single-Dose Vial THAW TIME	
Refrigerator (2°C to 8°C)	Up to 2 hours
Room Temperature (up to 25°C)	30 minutes

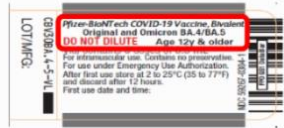


Single Dose Vial Dose Preparation:

- ✓ Before use, gently invert the vaccine vial per EUA Fact Sheet Preparation Instructions.
- ✓ Withdraw a single 0.3 mL dose.
- ✓ Administer immediately.
- ✓ Discard vial and any excess volume.

Important considerations

Pfizer currently has four different grey labels in use for the 12+ age group. It is important to differentiate between the vaccine products to ensure individuals 12 years and older receive the appropriate vaccine.

The GRAY caps and GRAY vial label borders of both vaccines are IDENTICAL

 Monovalent Multiple Dose Vial	 Monovalent Multiple Dose Vial	 Bivalent Multiple Dose Vial	 Bivalent Multiple Dose Vial
 Monovalent Single Dose Vial	 Monovalent Single Dose Vial	 Bivalent Single Dose Vial	 Bivalent Single Dose Vial



Before administration, please see full Prescribing Information: 12 years of age and older or appropriate EUA Fact Sheet for Vaccination Providers. For the most recent prescribing information and fact sheets, please visit www.covidvaccine-us.com

Provider notice: Flu cases rising sharply in Louisiana

As of November 14, influenza activity in Louisiana continues to increase dramatically and already has reached its highest point in the past five years.

Reports to LDH's Office of Public Health through its Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) showed:

- 10.49 percent of patient visits in Louisiana were due to influenza-like illness
- This is more than twice the regional average of 3.9 percent, and
- Nearly twice the national average of 5.5 percent

LDH is urging healthcare providers to remind their patients to get their flu shot and updated COVID-19 booster for maximum protection during this flu season.

LDH urges healthcare providers to help keep their patients up to date on their COVID-19 and flu vaccinations with the holidays quickly approaching.

State Health Officer Dr. Joe Kanter reminds providers of the importance of making sure their youngest patients get the flu shot.

"The vaccine is especially important for young children. Since 2004-2005, flu-related deaths in children have ranged from 37 deaths to 199 deaths each year in the U.S., and approximately 80% of pediatric flu deaths occurred in children who did not get a flu shot. This year there have already been five pediatric deaths due to the flu in the U.S. and one in Louisiana," Dr. Kanter reports.

LDH urges healthcare providers to offer both the flu and COVID shots to their patients. It is safe and convenient to administer both the flu shot and the COVID-19 boosters at the same time. There is no spacing needed between the two vaccinations.

Week 44 FluView report

Flu activity continues to increase across the country, with the highest levels of activity occurring in the southeast and south-central parts of the country, followed by the Mid-Atlantic and the south-central West Coast regions. Click below for key points summarizing FluView data and other relevant flu-related information.

[FluView Report Week 44](#)

NOTE: These key points are meant to support consistent messaging around influenza and can be shared with partners; however, they should not be posted in any public-facing web content.

State health officials urge families to take preventative measures during the current respiratory virus surge

On November 3, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) President and Chief Medical Officer of the Alaska Department of Health Anne Zink, MD, FACEP, issued the following statement given the rise in respiratory illness activity across the country and increasing strain on hospitals.

"We are concerned about the surge in children's respiratory illnesses circulating in communities across the country," she said. "Many states are seeing a spike in children's hospitalizations from COVID-19, flu, and RSV; adult cases are also on the rise. Unfortunately, this means that many hospitals are at or near capacity and it is beginning to strain healthcare systems."

Public health officials are currently partnering with hospital systems throughout the country to increase bed capacity, explore ways to address workforce shortfalls, promote immunization, and communicate with the public on the best ways to prevent the spread of these diseases. The partnership between public health and healthcare is essential in ensuring individuals have the knowledge and tools to prevent illness and can access care when needed.

State and territorial public health officials urge parents and families to take precautions now in order to be healthy and to avoid putting strain on hospital systems. The best way to avoid serious complications from many respiratory illnesses is for everyone to stay up to date on their vaccinations. Other prevention measures such as frequent handwashing and staying home when you are sick can also help stop the spread of illness."

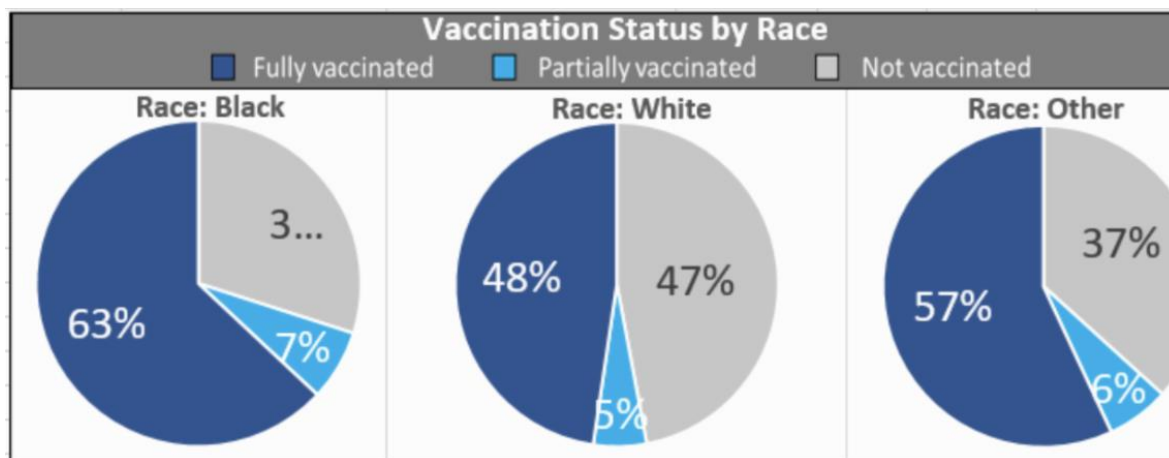
Racial justice competencies for public health professionals

Public Health Training Center Network (PHTCN), with support from the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), formed a racial justice workgroup that has developed the Racial Justice Competency Model for Public Health Professionals (RJCM) as an educational and operational framework for the public health workforce.

The RJCM gives public health professionals a single, clear, specific competency set for intentionally promoting equity and racial justice. The PHTCs, partners, and other public health professionals can use the RJCM for training, hiring, performance management and policy development while addressing racism in public health.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the process and to download the competencies.

COVID-19 demographics



As of November 10, 2022, Louisiana now has a *majority* of people identifying as Black and Other races fully vaccinated for Covid-19! In fact, the percentage of Black Louisianans fully vaccinated is the highest now among the three race categories shown here.