

IMMUNIZATION Update

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Question of the Week

Is washing your hands still effective in preventing the flu and COVID-19?



Yes! Along with flu and COVID-19 washing your hands can prevent the spread of numerous viruses including the common cold, RSV, bronchitis, pneumonia, COVID-19, TB and more. Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections. People can avoid spreading germs by simply washing their hands and avoiding their “T Zone.”

The T Zone is on your face and is comprised of your eyes, nose and mouth, the only portal of entry into the human body for ALL respiratory infections. Practicing the four Principles of Hand Awareness behaviors, below, will protect you and stay well.

1. Wash your hands when they are dirty and before eating.
2. DO NOT cough into your hands – cough into your elbow or your shirt.
3. DO NOT sneeze into your hands – sneeze into your elbow or your shirt.
4. Above all, DO NOT put your fingers into your eyes, nose or mouth.
5. **BONUS** – If you feel like you have a persistent cough or sneeze, wear a mask.

To recognize National Handwashing week next week (December 5 – 11) please encourage your patients and others to spread the word about the importance of proper hand washing.

Resources

- [National Handwashing Week letter from Dr. Will Sawyer of Henry the Hand Foundation](#)
- [Check out this fun video from the CDC.](#)

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 (SDV) 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 of November 28.

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 the ease of access to COVID-19 vaccines and creates the potential for more equitable availability of this lifesaving product.

The Louisiana Department of Health's Immunization Program has designed one-pager graphics made to summarize Pfizer's bivalent SDV and considerations. Please share the graphics with your networks.

Resources:

[Pfizer Bivalent SDV Storage and Handling](#)

28th annual Louisiana Shots for Tots State Conference

The Louisiana Shots for Tots Coalition is excited to present the 28th Annual Shots for Tots State Conference, **December 6-7, 2022**, after a two-year delay from the pandemic! [Register and join us](#) to hear from fantastic speakers, the latest on immunizations and network with private and public health professionals from across the state.

Healthcare workers including physicians, nurses, school nurses, pharmacists, pharmacy techs and those interested in immunizations are invited to join us. Your support allows The Louisiana Shots for Tots Coalition to put together a great conference for public and private health professionals and we look forward to seeing you there.

[Click here to purchase tickets.](#)

National Influenza Vaccination Week

National Influenza Vaccination Week (Dec. 5 – 9) is a great opportunity to remind everyone six months and older that there's still time to protect themselves and their loved ones from flu this flu season by getting their annual flu vaccine if they have not already. Currently, flu activity is elevated across the country, so this awareness week serves as a reminder that there is still time to benefit from the first and most important action in [preventing flu illness and potentially serious flu complications](#): get a flu vaccine today.

Week 46 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.

In Louisiana, during Week 46:

- 8.55% of patient visits reported through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to influenza-like illness (ILI).
- This percentage is above the regional baseline of 3.9%.
- The ILI case definition changed starting with the 2021-2022 season: fever >100.3 AND cough and/or sore throat.

Cumulative 2022-23 influenza vaccinations statewide:

1. Flu vaccines given to 0-17yo: 104,391
2. Flu vaccines given to 18+: 534,927

[FluView Report Week 46](#)

Vax matters podcast: Children & the COVID-19 vaccine



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.

Even though we hear about vaccines every day, what do we know about them? The Vax Matters podcast provides listeners with the truths behind immunization from all angles.

With infants and children, how do the different age groups rank in number of COVID-19 vaccinations? The CDC's Dr. Evelyn Twentymen appears on our show to dive into these rates and why they stand where they are. Episodes are available on most major podcast platforms. Click here to listen now: [Apple](#), [Spotify](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Stitcher](#), [Amazon](#), [Audible](#)

Come chat with us on the Vax Matters podcast and be a future guest! Email Jourdan.barnes@la.gov for more information.

December first is World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day takes place on Dec. 1 each year. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show support for people living with HIV and commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

As of September 30, 2022, a total of 22,708 persons were living with HIV (PLWH) in Louisiana. Of these individuals, 11,084 persons (49%) have progressed to an AIDS diagnosis. In 2020, Louisiana ranked 4th in the nation for HIV case rates and 11th in the number of estimated HIV cases.

The advancement in technology has allowed individuals to live long and healthy lives for PLWH by using antiretroviral medication to suppress the virus to a point where HIV is no longer detectable in that person (U=U). For people who are not living with HIV, preventative medication, PrEP, is now available. PrEP can significantly decrease the chances of contracting HIV. There is also promise soon for an HIV vaccine thanks to the technology and science used to create the COVID-19 vaccine.

NIH launches clinical trial of three mRNA HIV vaccines

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health, has launched a Phase 1 clinical trial evaluating three experimental HIV vaccines based on a messenger RNA (mRNA) platform—a technology used in several approved COVID-19 vaccines.

NIAID is sponsoring the study, called HVTN 302, and the NIAID-funded HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN), based at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, is conducting the trial.

Each investigational vaccine candidate is designed to present the spike protein found on the surface of HIV that facilitates entry into human cells. Each of the experimental vaccines encodes for different but highly related, stabilized proteins. None of the three vaccine candidates can cause HIV infection.

Safety and immune responses will be examined via blood and lymph node fine-needle aspiration samples taken at specified time points throughout the trial. Clinical staff will closely monitor participant safety throughout the study. The clinical trial is expected to be completed by July 2023.

[Visit the National Institute of Health's website for more information.](#)

Join CDC and CDPH for joint COVID-19 narrative briefings

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) have made it a priority to enhance insight into the causes of vaccine hesitancy and to share strategies that reduce the harmful impacts of misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccines.

Joint COVID-19 narrative briefings

CDC and CDPH have teamed up to host a series of Joint COVID-19 Narrative Briefings. These briefings provide public health organizations with a baseline understanding of some of the English and Spanish online narratives that may undermine confidence in COVID-19 vaccines, as well as tactics to counter them.

During the briefings, CDC and CDPH will share insights into COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, highlight prominent current rumors and inaccurate information about the COVID-19 vaccines with high levels of online engagement, and provide proven strategies, trusted information and resources about the COVID-19 vaccines.

The next session is set for **Dec. 13 at 4:00 PM ET /3:00 PM CT/ 2:00 PM MT, and 1:00 PM PT via Zoom**. Subsequent sessions will take place monthly.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwucOmraqDkiEt3ph7G8ORqE-HaEt691lddp>

Questions: vaccinestrategists@cdc.gov