



COOK COUNTY HEALTH

ISRAEL ROCHA, JR.
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Addendum to slide deck)
May 28, 2021

Recognition

Earlier this month, Cook County Health celebrated Nurses Week by recognizing outstanding nurses and patient care staff at its annual Clinical Excellence Award Ceremony. Their hard work and commitment to caring for patients across the health system is a testament to the mission of CCH. Congratulations to:

- **Shiny James, RN**, Correctional Health
- **Binu Jomon, RN**, Wound Management
- **Linda Magee, RN**, Cook County Department of Public Health
- **Maria Martinez, CMA**, Ambulatory Care
- **Kevin Murray, RN**, Critical Care
- **Barbara O'Brien, RN**, Care Coordination Services
- **Kierra Patterson, RN**, Med/Surg
- **Joann Wilson, RN**, CountyCare
- **Criselda Yulo, RN**, Critical Care

On April 22, the Graduate Medical Education Committee Research Subcommittee hosted its second annual Institutional Research Day. This year, it was combined with the COVID-19 Research Consortium and was a huge success. This event provided the opportunity for physicians in training and health care professionals at Cook County Health to share their research projects, case series or case reports with an emphasis on COVID-19 research. A panel discussion featured some of CCH's leading researchers focused on improving patient outcomes during the pandemic. Each training program was encouraged to make submissions to highlight the diversity of all academic projects. Institutional Research Day highlights the scholarly work that is advancing CCH's mission of excellence and dedication to care for our communities.

GMEC Research Subcommittee and COVID-19 Research Consortium:

- **Dr. Steve Aks**, Chair, Emergency Medicine and Toxicology
- **Dr. Vivek Chaudry**, Chair, Colon and Rectal Services
- **Dr. Errick Christian**, Research Associate
- **Dr. Mohamed Elkhoully**, Chief Resident, Internal Medicine
- **Dr. Elena Gonzalez**, Resident, Internal Medicine
- **Dr. Michael Hoffman**, Attending, Hospital Medicine
- **Estelle Hu**, Librarian
- **Dr. Ahmed Kolkailah**, Chief Resident, Internal Medicine
- **Dr. Juleigh Nowinski-Konchak**, Attending, Preventive Medicine
- **Dr. Katayoun Rezai**, Attending, Infectious Disease
- **Dr. William Trick**, Attending, Collaborative Research Unit

2021 Institutional Research Day Award Winners:

- **Dr. Addul Wahab Arif**, Resident, Internal Medicine
- **Dr. Asma Hashim**, Resident, Emergency Medicine
- **Dr. Lin Li**, Resident, Internal Medicine
- **Dr. Alexander Robin**, Resident, Ophthalmology

- **Dr. Mahwash Siddiqi**, Research Fellow, Trauma
- **Dr. Lauren Uichanco**, Resident, Family Medicine
- **Dr. Sujitha Velagapudi**, Resident, Internal Medicine
- **Dr. Chen Wang**, Fellow, Preventive Medicine

Activities and Announcements

- COVID-19 – See CEO Report Presentation Deck
- On May 3rd, CCH held a press conference to discuss its vaccine equity strategy and released its [Vaccine Equity Report](#).
- On May 4th, Israel Rocha, CEO, participated in a press conference releasing the 2nd year report from Illinois health systems and U.S. Senator Richard J. Durbin on strengthening neighborhood engagement to reduce violence and improve health. The report can be found [here](#).
- On May 14th, CCH held a press conference to announce the expansion of vaccine availability to 12+.

Food As Medicine Update

- As access to healthy food remains a great need for our patients and communities, the Fresh Truck partnership between Cook County Health (CCH) and the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) continues. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic required CCH and GCFD to develop and implement revised protocols for the Fresh Truck distributions that allow for appropriate screenings and social distancing to protect patients, as well as CCH and GCFD staff and volunteers. These revised protocols are in place until further notice.

Through May 15, CCH’s Fresh Truck partnership with the GCFD resulted in 324 visits to CCH health centers – Arlington Heights, Austin, Blue Island, the CORE Center, Cottage Grove, Englewood, Logan Square, North Riverside, Provident/Sengstacke, Prieto, and Robbins.

Collectively, the Fresh Truck distributions have resulted in the provision of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as some shelf stable items during the COVID-19 pandemic, to an estimated 38,642 individuals, representing 127,941 household members, totaling more than 843,000 pounds of food. Most of the individuals benefiting from the Fresh Truck screened positive for food insecurity at a CCH health center visit.

The Greater Chicago Food Depository’s Fresh Food Truck visits for the month of June include the following ACHN Health Centers.

June 1 – **North Riverside Health Center** – 1800 S. Harlem Avenue, North Riverside, IL 60546

June 3 – **Austin Health Center** – 4800 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60651

June 8 – **Cottage Grove Health Center** – 1645 Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights, IL 60411

June 15 – **Robbins Health Center** – 13450 S. Kedzie Avenue, Robbins, IL 60472

June 17 – **Englewood Health Center** – 1135 W. 69th Street, Chicago, IL 60621

- CCH began hosting Top Box pickups at Provident Hospital in December 2020 – these will continue through the first half of 2021, while we monitor participation. Additional CCH pickup sites may be added, depending on interest from staff and community members. Friday, June 25 from 3-4pm is the last scheduled Top Box pickup at Provident Hospital.

A variety of pre-packed boxes of fruits, vegetables, and various proteins are available for pre-order. Top Box Foods accepts debit and credit card payments, as well as SNAP, making it an option for community members who may be resource limited. Visit the Top Box Foods website at <https://www.topboxfoods.com/cook-county-chicago/home> for more information and to place an order.

Top Box Foods is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization that seeks to make great, healthy, affordable food accessible to all. Top Box Foods offers fresh produce, frozen meats, and other essentials and believes that filling your plate and feeding your community doesn't have to mean emptying your wallet.

IMPACT 2023 Objective 5.1C

- Cook County Health Advisory Councils include patients, community and religious organizations and serve as a way to promote our services in the communities where our centers are located. The Councils provide feedback to our staff and help strengthen our health centers' relationships in the community. The Councils meet quarterly to provide current information on Cook County Health and as an avenue for members to share information about their organizations.

Upcoming CAC meeting dates:

North Riverside: Wednesdays at 1:00 PM: June 16, September 15, December 15

Englewood: Thursdays at 1:00 PM: June 17, September 16, December 16

Provident Hospital/Sengstacke Health Center: Wednesdays at 10:00 AM: July 14, October 13

Cottage Grove: Tuesdays at 1:00 PM: July 27, October 26

Robbins: Tuesdays at 1:00 PM: August 17, November 16

Arlington Heights: Tuesdays at 1:00 PM: August 24, November 23

IMPACT 2023 Focus Area 5

- In collaboration with the Cook County Department of Public Health Office of Community Mobilization, Cook County Health is helping promote vaccination at the Mass Vaccination sites and Priority sites. In the past months, initiatives have been engaged to promote vaccination at the following events and places:
 - Summit Priority Pod – 5700 S Archer Rd, Summit, IL 60501
 - Thornton Fractional Priority Pod – 18500 Burnham Ave, Lansing, IL 60438
 - West Leyden High School Priority Pod – 1000 N Wolf Rd, Northlake, IL 60164
 - Thornton Township Priority Pod – 15001 Broadway Ave, Harvey, IL 60426
 - PLCCA Vaccination event – 411 Madison St, Maywood, IL 60153
 - Harper College Vaccination event – 1200 W Algonquin Rd, Palatine, IL 60067

Upcoming Events

Friday, June 4th at 2:00PM – Ribbon Cutting for the Blue Island Health Center

Thursday, June 10th at 11:30AM – Ribbon Cutting for the Provident Dialysis Center

Media, social media reports and other documents attached.

Legislative Update

Local

- On May 11, the Cook County Health & Hospitals Committee held their monthly meeting. The agenda included a *COVID-19 Vaccine and Contact Tracing Update* from CCH CEO Israel Rocha and CCDPH Co-Leads Dr. Kiran Joshi and Dr. Rachel Rubin. The agenda also included consideration of a Resolution Declaring Gun Violence a Public Health Crisis. Carol Reese, CCH's Violence Prevention Coordinator and the Co-Director of Healing Hurt People Chicago, spoke to the Gun Violence Resolution and provided Commissioners information on the Healing Hurt People program. Among the specific activities the Resolution directed the County to work with community organizations to "...actively work towards reducing the 30-40 million dollars spent each year at Cook County Health on trauma from gun violence by creating a budget line item specifically used for gun violence prevention and intervention..."

The next meeting of the Cook County Health & Hospitals Committee is scheduled for June 22. At that meeting CCDPH will present their *Second Annual Quarterly Report*. CCH will also make a presentation on our Jail Mitigation and Respite Housing efforts for which CCH will receive an award from the National Association of Counties Organization (NACo) at their July 2021 Annual Conference.

CCH will continue to provide a *COVID-19 Vaccine and Contact Tracing Update* to the committee every month through the end of calendar year 2021.

- The terms of CCH Board Directors Driscoll, Hammock and Reiter expire in June 2021. The Cook County Board of Commissioners consented to President Preckwinkle's re-appointment of Director Bob Reiter to the Cook County Health Board at the May 13 Cook County Board Meeting. At the same meeting President Preckwinkle's appointment of Lyndon Taylor to the Cook County Health Board was referred to the County Board's Legislation and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee for consideration. The next meeting of the Legislation Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, June 23.

State

- The Illinois General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn May 31. Legislation approved before May 31 requires a simple majority; after May 31, a supermajority is required for approval. The state fiscal year begins July 1.

A number of outstanding issues related to Medicaid may be included in a Medicaid omnibus bill, including the addition of new benefits and covered providers, extension and expansion of Medicaid eligibility as allowed by the federal Public Health Emergency, provider rate increases, and technical clean-up language.

The Budget Implementation Bill (BIMP) passed in the spring 2020 legislative session included a Medicaid-like expansion for older adult immigrants. Similar expansions and other Medicaid provisions could be included in the 2021 BIMP.

- The combination of federal dollars from COVID-19 relief legislation and better than expected state revenues has resulted in a significant decrease in Illinois' unpaid bill backlog. As of May 24, the backlog stood at \$3.4B; at its peak, Illinois had \$16B in unpaid bills. Illinois is now paying most vendors in 30 days or less, a significant improvement from payment cycles over the last several years.
- **SB1840** (Sen. Mattie Hunter/Rep. Camille Lilly) serves as the legislative vehicle for the joint effort between Cook County and Cook County Health to improve health equity and access to care.

SB1840 seeks to increase transparency and public access to hospital data, including what hospitals are doing when it comes to provision of care to uninsured patients, what services uninsured patients are using,

and demographics of these patients, as well as other data related to what hospitals are doing to advance health equity and reduce health disparities. The legislation also seeks to improve the process by which patients are screened for and connected to Medicaid and hospital financial assistance programs.

This effort will help lay the groundwork for future changes and system improvements for more equitable access to care by insured and uninsured patients across all hospitals.

Over the past several months, meetings have taken place with numerous stakeholders, including the Illinois Attorney General's Office and the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA), as well as with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, Legal Council for Health Justice, and labor partners including National Nurses Organizing Committee, SEIU, Doctors Council, and Teamsters. These discussions and negotiation sessions have resulted in an agreed amendment that removes opposition from the bill while keeping the original goals of the legislation intact.

[SB1840, as amended](#), passed unanimously out of the Senate on April 21. The House Executive Committee passed it 15-0-0 with 94 proponents filing a slip in support; there was no opposition. The bill passed the House unanimously 110-0-0 and awaits a concurrence vote in the Senate.

- The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) published their [Maternal and Morbidity and Mortality Report](#), which reviewed maternal deaths that occurred in Illinois from 2016-2017. A summary of the report's findings can be found on the IDPH website.

The report highlighted the persistent disparities in maternal mortality among Black women, who were shown to be three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related condition compared to White women. Recommendations for hospitals, health care providers, public and private insurance, state agencies, community-based organizations, and individuals were also outlined. Several recommendations, including extended postpartum coverage, implicit bias training for providers, greater use of home visiting, doulas, and telehealth services, have been or are in the process of being addressed through the recent approval of the 1115 Medicaid waiver, enactment of HB158, and pending state legislation.

- Last month, the Governor signed [HB158/PA 102-0004](#), the health and human services omnibus legislation championed by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus. HB158 took effect upon signature, on April 27, 2021.

HB158 includes language from the omnibus that passed the Senate in the January session, which reflects agreed provisions from hospitals, Medicaid MCOs, and other stakeholders. The bill also includes new requirements for implicit bias training for health care workers, authorizes Medicaid coverage of doulas, perinatal home visiting, and community health workers. Many provisions, including those that concern new Medicaid services and providers, are subject to appropriations.

CCH supports HB158.

Federal

- **FY 2022 Budget and Appropriations** – President Biden is expected to submit a more fully detailed FY 2022 budget request to Congress on May 28. Meanwhile, the Appropriations process has proceeded with subcommittee hearings. Speaker Pelosi has said she wants to have the 12 bills on the House floor before the August recess.

House Member offices also processed constituent requests for Community Project Funding, aka "earmarks", for the first time since they were banned over a decade ago. Additionally, the Senate decided to permit Congressionally Directed Spending, opening the door for earmarks in the upper chamber as well.

Both House and Senate approaches are limited and highly circumscribed, described by leadership as a trial run to see if the process can be transparent and inspire public confidence.

- **Biden Administration** – On May 25, the Senate confirmed Chiquita Brooks-LaSure’s nomination for Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Senator Cornyn (R-Texas) encouraged Republican colleagues to oppose her nomination in protest of the Biden Administration rescinding Texas’ new ten-year Medicaid section 1115 waiver granted in the last days of the Trump Administration.

Other Administration actions of interest to CCH include:

- **Inpatient PPS proposed rule FY22** – On April 27, CMS issued its hospital inpatient prospective payment system (PPS) and long-term care hospital (LTCH) PPS proposed rule for FY 2022. The rule applies to inpatient PPS hospitals, critical access hospitals (CAHs), LTCHs and PPS-exempt cancer hospitals. Comments on the proposed rule are due June 28. The final rule will be published around the beginning of August and take effect on October 1. The proposed rule says hospitals would no longer have to report the median payer-specific negotiated charge with MA insurers on its Medicare cost reports retroactive to Jan. 1, 2021. This change is estimated to eliminate more than 63,000 burden hours for providers. CMS also plans to increase Medicare fee-for-service payments for acute care inpatient hospitals and long-term care hospitals by about \$2.5 billion. This would include funding for new medical residency positions, which Congress included in its omnibus appropriations bill enacted at the end of last year. CMS also proposes to extend add-on payments for new COVID-19 treatments until the end of the fiscal year during which the PHE concludes. CMS proposed several changes to the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program, Hospital-Acquired Condition Program and Hospital Value-Based Purchasing Program to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on these performance-based programs.
 - **COVID-19 Coverage Assistance Fund** – On May 3, HHS announced that HRSA will pay providers to administer COVID-19 vaccines to underinsured patients. Under the program, HRSA will reimburse providers at Medicare rates. Providers can submit claims dating back to Dec. 14, 2020.
 - **340B** – On May 17, HRSA sent letters to six pharmaceutical companies, warning them that they could be subject to fines of up to \$5,000 per overcharge if they do not allow 340B discounts in 340B providers contract pharmacies. Letters were sent to AstraZeneca, Lilly USA, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Sanofi and United Therapeutics.
- **Biden “American Jobs Plan” and “American Families Plan”** – Throughout May, the White House engaged in high-level negotiations with Senate Republicans over the contents and cost of the President’s Jobs Plan/Infrastructure bill. At the time of writing, observers are not optimistic that a breakthrough is imminent, given that the sides remain very far apart.

America’s Essential Hospitals continues to advocate that the infrastructure package should include funding for safety net hospitals including, hospital capital investments (e.g., a renewed Hill-Burton program as envisioned by House Energy and Commerce Democrats), digital infrastructure, emergency preparedness and workforce development.

On April 28, the White House rolled out high-level details of the President’s American Families Plan a \$1.8 trillion spending proposal to expand childcare, paid family and medical leave, tuition-free community college, nutrition programs and other initiatives. Ultimately the White House did not include proposals to address prescription drug prices. Speaker Pelosi and House Democrats have vowed to continue to press forward with a reintroduced version of H.R. 3. The American Families Plan faces difficult odds in Congress.

Cook County Health Media Clips Report

April 24 – May 21, 2021

Media Dashboard: April 24 – May 21, 2021

Total Number of Media Hits: 148

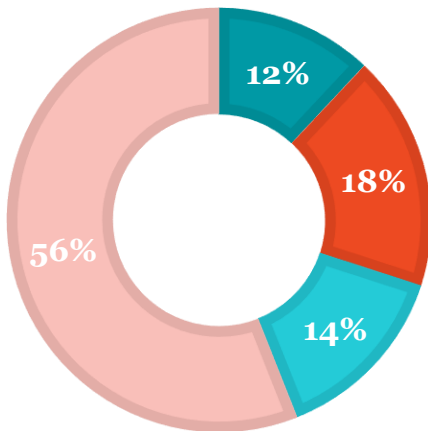
Top 5 Local Media Outlets

1. NBC-5
2. ABC-7
3. FOX-32
4. CBS-2
5. Chicago Tribune

Top 5 National Media Outlets

1. Yahoo! News
2. MSN
3. Fox Business News
4. AP
5. USA Today

Media Outlet Type

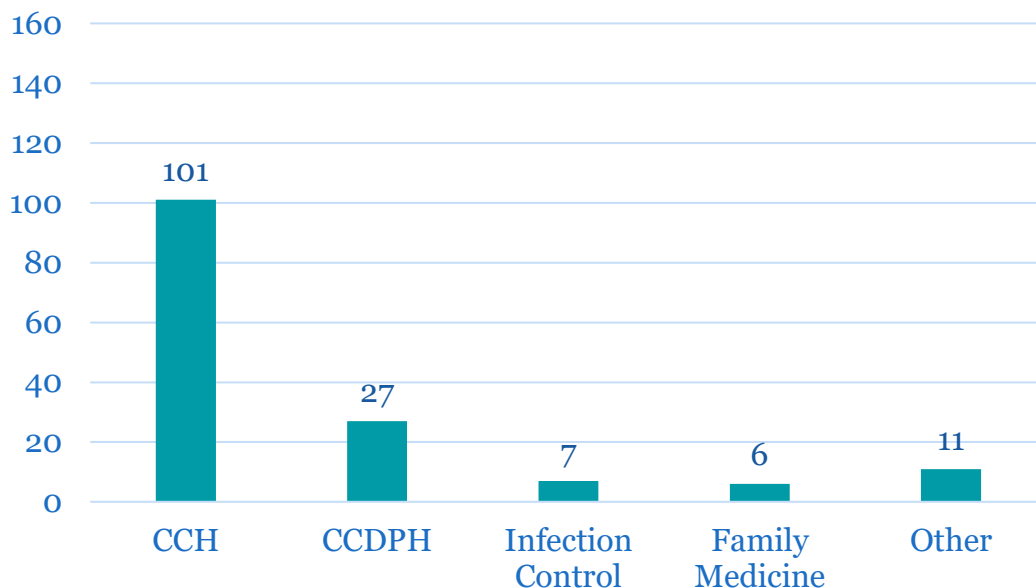


■ Web ■ Print ■ Radio ■ Television

Most Common Topics

1. Preparing for 12+ vaccinations
2. Now accepting walk-in COVID-19 vaccine appointments
3. Encouraging 12+ to get vaccinated
4. Restaurant worker day
5. Johnson & Johnson vaccine

Media Mentions by Department



Chicago Tribune

Cook County doctors say vaccine pause should create confidence; walk-in appointments start Monday

Charles J. Johnson

April 24, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-cook-county-johnson-johnson-vaccine-20210424-eqn73u7oejhdhhijur2e25kisu-story.html>

Cook County health officials announced Saturday appointments won't be necessary at suburban mass vaccination sites starting Monday after they and the city said they are once again administering the one-shot Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine after an [11-day pause](#).

"We are confident in the safety and efficacy of the J&J vaccine. This pause and safety review shows our vaccine safety monitoring system is working," the Chicago Department of Public Health said in a statement late Friday, indicating the shot would be put back into use immediately. "Millions of people have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine with no serious side effects and serious reactions are extremely rare."

Local health authorities followed the feds in pausing use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine April 13 after reports that six women experienced blood clots weeks after receiving the shot. Ultimately, federal officials said they found 15 clotting cases amid nearly 8 million shots given. All were women, most under 50. Three died, and seven remained hospitalized as of Friday.

On Saturday during a morning news conference held via Zoom, [Dr. Rachel Rubin](#) of the Cook County Department of Public Health said the pause was an important step because it allowed time for physicians to learn how to treat anyone who has been inoculated showing signs of [the atypical clotting](#). A normal course of treatment for clotting [could prove dangerous](#) to those who have been vaccinated, and more guidance for doctors is coming from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Tuesday, Rubin said.

Anyone who received a Johnson & Johnson shot should seek medical attention from their health care providers if they are showing symptoms of clotting — trouble breathing, leg swelling, pain in the chest or abdomen and blurred vision — doctors said.

Both Rubin and her co-lead, Dr. Kiran Joshi, said Americans should see the pause on the Johnson & Johnson shot as proof the government is taking complications very seriously and that the evidence it assembled during this period shows the vaccine is overwhelmingly safe.

At the same time, "we don't want to force people into vaccines they're not comfortable with," Rubin said, stressing there are three options for vaccination for those who want to avoid the paused medicine.

Both doctors felt the pause was worth it despite how it might be contributing to vaccine hesitancy and said many patients are specifically seeking out the Johnson & Johnson shot because of the ease of administration — one shot and done.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine, they said, is particularly valuable for vaccinating those who are hesitant, or have trouble reaching mass vaccination sites or booking online because of its easier storage and handling requirements relative to the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech jabs.

Rubin said Cook County has begun to see some [“softening” of vaccine demand](#), even as they continue to give out thousands of shots per day. Some public health officials are concerned the U.S. [will soon reach the “tipping point”](#) when all enthusiastic shot seekers have been inoculated, leaving only skeptics and those who refuse.

With that in mind, Cook County announced Saturday that mass vaccination sites will allow walk-ins with no previous appointments starting April 26 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

“We’re trying to make the right thing to do the easy thing to do,” Joshi said. Sites in Tinley Park and Matteson started taking walk-ins on April 21.

One group of doctors in Chicago, the Chicago Medical Society, suggested physicians should be taking the lead giving it out to hesitant patients, who will trust them more, and can ask questions and have a dialogue around the shot.

“The problem now is the public is afraid,” Dr. Vishnu Chundi, chairman of the Chicago Medical Society’s COVID-19 task force, [told the Tribune](#). “Johnson & Johnson has had all this bad press. The only person patients are going to trust is their doctor. Give the vaccine to the doctors to educate the public.”

As for when Cook County residents can relegate their masks to the bottom of the sock drawer?

Rubin said it’s possible masks will be mandated or recommended into 2022, but that it’s too soon to tell for sure. Public health guidance will be driven by studying how effectively the vaccines curtail community spread of COVID-19, which depends in part on how the virus mutates — so-called variants. The more people who are vaccinated, the less likelihood of variants.

It may be possible, Rubin said, masks would continue to be recommended when mixing with unrelated people in a crowd, such as at a baseball game or concert.

Cook County doctors say vaccine pause should create confidence; walk-in appointments start Monday

Charles J. Johnson
April 24, 2021

https://www.pantagraph.com/lifestyles/health-med-fit/cook-county-doctors-say-vaccine-pause-should-create-confidence/article_5a154e98-17bb-5fc9-93bd-8e87a70778c5.html

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Illinois to resume use of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine

April 24, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/illinois-to-resume-use-of-johnson-johnson-covid-19-vaccine>

The Illinois Department of Public Health will resume the use of the [Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine](#) following the announcement by the FDA and CDC that they have lifted the previously recommended pause on the J&J vaccine.

IDPH says the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) conducted a review of the vaccine after six cases were reported of a rare and severe type of blood clot in individuals following administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Providers in Illinois who received doses of the vaccine will be able to immediately begin administering the vaccine.

Allocations of the vaccine by the federal government will resume next week.

IDPH says approximately 760,000 doses were allocated to the state before the pause, and approximately 290,000 were administered.

The Cook County Department of Public Health said, in part, that it does take the blood clot issue very seriously, but knows that it is extremely rare.

"Today's meeting made clear that public health experts from across the country agree that the benefits of getting the J&J vaccine outweigh the risks," the department said in a statement. "This vaccine, like the Pfizer and Moderna options, are safe and very effective. They represent our only chance to escape this pandemic."

Cook County Health officials also announced [a pilot program this week](#) for walk-in coronavirus vaccinations at two south suburban sites, allowing residents to receive a vaccination without an appointment.

The mass vaccination sites — located in Tinley Park at 18451 Convention Center Dr. and in Matteson at 4647 Promenade Way — will be open between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday, health officials said. Those with appointments will also still be able to get their shots.



Chicago, Cook County, Illinois Health Officials Restart Administering J&J Vaccine

Heather Cherone

April 24, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/04/24/chicago-cook-county-illinois-health-officials-restart-administering-jj-vaccine>

The Illinois Department of Public Health, the Chicago Department of Public Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health restarted administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine on Saturday, as officials said it is safe and effective.

State and local health officials stopped administering the one-shot vaccine “out of an abundance of caution” for 11 days while federal officials examined data involving 15 cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot in individuals, most of whom were women younger than 50.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer of the Cook County Department of Public Health, told reporters Saturday morning that she was pleased federal officials had cleared the vaccine for use after adding an additional warning about the possibility of blood clots and treatment recommendations.

“It is important to have choices and to have as much vaccine as possible,” Rubin said. “You are much more at risk of getting a blood clot if you contract COVID-19 than from the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.”

Dr. Kiran Joshi, the co-lead for the Cook County Department of Public Health, said data show the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is “not only effective but safe.” With more than 8 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine administered, the chance of experiencing a severe reaction from a blood clot is two in 1 million, Joshi said.

Despite the delay in getting the life-saving vaccine to those in need, Rubin and Joshi said the pause was definitely worth it and should serve to increase confidence in the safety and efficacy of all COVID-19 vaccines, rather than making people more hesitant to get inoculated.

“We believe there is quite a bit of pent-up demand for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine,” Joshi said.

As Cook County restarts efforts to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, officials said Saturday they were no longer considering ordering additional restrictions as a [“very sharp” increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations that alarmed officials](#) appears to have slowed.

“We are hopeful that the increase has peaked or plateaued,” Joshi said.

All Cook County mass vaccination sites will open for walk-in appointments between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. starting Monday, officials said.

All city of Chicago mass vaccination sites [opened to walk-in appointments on Friday](#).

That is possible because of a softening of demand for the COVID-19 and increased supplies, Rubin said.

Officials with the Illinois Department of Health said the state had about 470,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine when the pause was lifted Friday evening by federal officials.

Officials with the Chicago Department of Public Health called the Johnson & Johnson vaccine “an important tool in the City’s vaccination strategy” in a statement after federal officials acted Friday evening.

When federal officials recommended local health officials stop administering the one-shot vaccine, the city had approximately 13,000 doses on hand, officials said.

City health officials began offering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at the vaccination site at Kennedy King College on Saturday.

Chicago officials will resume using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to inoculate homebound Chicagoans, and the Chicago Federation of Labor mass vaccination site will once again offer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, along with the city's vaccination bus program, officials said.



Walk-Ins Will Be Allowed At All Cook County COVID-19 Vaccination Sites Starting Monday

April 26, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/26/walk-ins-cook-county-covid-19-vaccination-sites-starting-monday/>

No appointment needed – suburban Cook County health leaders want you to know it will be easier than ever to get your COVID-19 shot.

As CBS 2's Steven Graves reported Sunday night, [walk-ins are allowed](#) at all its mass vaccination sites in the Cook County suburbs starting Monday.

Cook County Health said it will be as easy as walking up and getting a dose. This comes as officials still said they have a good amount of people who need the shot.

The not-so-long-past days of stalking websites and refreshing tabs for COVID-19 vaccine appointments is over.

“We encourage you to take advantage of the walk-ins,” said Cook County Health Ambulatory Services Chief Operating Officer Iliana Andrea Mora.

Cook County is now offering a walk-up option at all of its mass vaccination sites starting Monday. People can register on-site.

Make sure you bring an ID with you if you're going with the walk-in route. You'll need to show that before you can register on-site.

The locations are spread throughout the county. Right now, they are offering Pfizer and Moderna shots.

The following lists the county's mass vaccination sites:

- Tinley Park, 18451 Convention Center Dr. (Moderna, age 18+)
- Matteson, 4647 Promenade Way (Pfizer, age 16+)
- River Grove- Triton College, 2000 5th Ave. (Pfizer, age 16+)
- South Holland- South Suburban College, 15800 State St. (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Des Plaines, 1155 E. Oakton St. (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Forest Park, 7630 W. Roosevelt Rd. (Pfizer, age 16+)

A sign at the mass vaccination site in Forest Park still said “by appointment only” on Monday, but don't worry about that, you no longer need an appointment to get a shot at Cook County sites.

However, a majority of the people in line Monday morning still had them, and officials have said making an appointment is still the best way to make sure you can get a shot when you show up at mass vaccination sites.

“I was scared of the vaccine, because it's new, but it's better to be protected than to have no protection at all,” Elizabeth Martinez said.

She said she knows first-hand why it's important to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

“My father got sick last year in November, and we almost lost him,” she said.

She was lined up for her second shot on Monday, but said the process to secure an appointment wasn’t easy, which is why she’s glad Cook County Health is cutting the red tape.

“I think it’s better, because people are still working, and they don’t have the time off to just come randomly,” she said.

Others who also already had appointments on Monday agreed.

“I think it’s great. I have no problem with it. The more people that get vaccinated, the better,” Amanda Pridmore said.

The sites at Tinley Park and Matteson have already been hosting walk-ins since last Wednesday in a pilot program.

We asked how it went.

“We learned that folks actually like it a lot,” Mora said.

The opening came with some worry about long lines, but Cook County Health’s Chief Operating Officer says it was not a problem.

“We saw pretty even traffic throughout the day,” Mora said. “Our mass-vaccination sites at Cook County Health have multiple teams of vaccinators.”

Chicago is [already offering shots to walk-ins](#) at its sites.

We spotted a steady flow of people at the United Center this weekend, and Kennedy-King College in Englewood has already started offering the Johnson & Johnson shot.

The resumption of the single-dose [Johnson & Johnson vaccine](#) in Chicago comes after the FDA put it on a brief pause due to rare blood clots in patients, but recently cleared it for allocation with a warning.

Cook County will not immediately offer J&J at its mass vaccination sites.

“We’re just reviewing the protocols and we hope to be able to offer it later this week,” Mora said.

It is with the goal of putting more shots in arms, as state data shows 30 percent of the county’s population is fully vaccinated.

Officials said about 50 percent of people have one shot.

“We still have a ways to go, and so this is just allowing easier access,” Mora said. “Hopefully, more people take advantage of it.”

Graves asked if supply will meet demand. He was told the county is in a “good place” for walk-ins.

Each site is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day except Sunday.

The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for 16 and 17-year-olds. The Pfizer vaccine is not offered at some sites. Anyone 16 or 17 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Appointments can still be made online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.



All Cook County COVID-19 Vaccination Sites Will Accept Walk-Ins Starting Monday

April 25, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-covid-19-vaccination-031900178.html>

No appointment needed - suburban Cook County health leaders want you to know it will be easier than ever to get your COVID-19 shot. CBS 2's Steven Graves reports.



Cook County mass vaccination sites welcome walk-ins beginning Monday

Brónagh Tumulty

Apr 25, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-mass-vaccination-sites-welcome-walk-ins-beginning-monday/>

Cook County residents who have encountered trouble booking a vaccine appointment online may find the new walk-in option more accessible, officials hope.

At the United Center, walk-ins for COVID-19 vaccines are already underway. Additionally, two mass vaccination sites in the suburbs piloted their own program Wednesday through Saturday. Moving forward, four additional sites outside of the city are expected to welcome walk-ins.

“We piloted walk-in appointments at two mass vaccination sites this week, Matteson and Tinley Park, said Iliana Mora, Chief Operating Officer for Cook County Health. “They went great.”

With the success of the walk-in options at Matteson and Tinley Park, Cook County health officials say they feel comfortable expanding.

“Our mass vaccination at Forest Park, Des Plaines, South Suburban College and Triton College, you’ll be able to walk in at any one of our six mass vaccination sites,” Mora told WGN.

Most of the walk-in sites will offer two of the three approved COVID-19 vaccines: Moderna or Pfizer. The one-shot vaccine Johnson and Johnson could soon return to Tinley Park.

“We hope to make an announcement about that some time this week,” Mora said.

The department announced late Friday that Illinois is resuming use of the Johnson & Johnson one-shot coronavirus vaccine after U.S. health officials lifted an 11-day pause on the vaccinations. The change came after scientific advisers decided the vaccine’s benefits outweigh a rare risk of blood clots.

“About 570,000 Americans have died,” Dr. Anthony Fauci said Sunday morning. “We have an effective vaccine that’s really, very, very safe. That is the reason why you want everyone to get vaccinated.”

Dr. Fauci added that taking a step back from the vaccine was necessary.

“People will realize we have taken safety very seriously,” he said. “We are out there trying to combat vaccine hesitancy that still is out there and one of the real reasons that people have hesitancy is concern about the safety of the vaccine.”



Cook County Health to welcome walk-ins at all mass vaccination sites starting Monday

April 24, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-health-to-welcome-walk-ins-at-all-mass-vaccination-sites-starting-monday>

Cook County Health will begin welcoming walk-ins at all of its [mass vaccination sites](#) beginning Monday, April 26.

The [Tinley Park](#) and [Matteson](#) sites were the first in Cook County to open for walk-ins on April 21.

Starting Monday, Cook County Health mass vaccination sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday for walk-ins.

List of mass vaccination sites/type of vaccine

- Tinley Park, 18451 Convention Center Drive (Moderna, age 18+)
- Matteson, 4647 Promenade Way (Pfizer, age 16+)
- River Grove- Triton College, 2000 5th Avenue (Pfizer, age 16+)
- South Holland- South Suburban College, 15800 State Street (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Des Plaines, 1155 E Oakton Street (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Forest Park, 7630 West Roosevelt Road (Pfizer, age 16+)

Individuals or groups interested in getting a vaccine can show up and register onsite.

The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for 16 and 17 year olds.

Therefore, these individuals must go to a site that has Pfizer.

Individuals who are 16 and 17 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Individuals can still make appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Daily Herald

J & J vaccine's return hailed by Cook County officials

Burt Constable and James Kane

April 25, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210424/j--j-vaccines-return-hailed-by-cook-county-officials>

Cook County health officials Saturday hailed the return of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in the fight against COVID-19.

The vaccine, halted while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention investigated fears it caused blood clots in some women, is "safe, effective and it's important to continue using it," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and colead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Of more than 8 million people who got the one-dose J & J vaccine, 15 women ages 18 to 49 developed blood clots. "You are much more at risk of getting a blood clot if you get COVID," Rubin noted.

Rubin said the return of use of the one-shot J & J vaccine is central to the goal to get 80 percent of people vaccinated to attain community immunity as the focus moves to giving shots in neighborhoods as well as in homes for those who cannot travel. The county has more than 200 mobile pop-up clinics scheduled, she said.

And beginning Monday, all Cook County Health mass vaccination sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday for walk-ins. The Pfizer vaccine will be available to anyone 16 or older at the following sites: 1155 E. Oakton St. in Des Plaines; 4647 Promenade Way in Matteson; Triton College, 2000 5th Ave., in River Grove; South Suburban College, 15800 State St. in South Holland; and 7630 W. Roosevelt Road in Forest Park. The Moderna vaccine is available to anyone 18 or older at 18451 Convention Center Drive in Tinley Park.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported that 125,524 vaccine doses were administered Friday. The seven-day rolling average is 113,814 doses. The department also reported 2,907 new confirmed and probable cases of the virus and 25 deaths, numbers on a par with recent days.

"We are hopeful we have peaked or plateaued," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, the other colead of the Cook County health department. He urged everyone to get vaccinated, wear masks in crowds or when with people who might be at risk, follow social distancing guidelines and wash hands frequently.

Deaths reported Saturday included nine people from Cook County, one from DuPage County, three from Kane County, one from McHenry County and two from Will County. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total tests from April 17-23 is 3.5%, down 0.1% from the previous day.

As of Friday night, 2,048 individuals in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19, down 64 people from the previous day. Of those, 462 patients were in the ICU, down 44, and 234 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators, up four.



Cook County to Accept Walk-Ins at Mass COVID Vaccination Sites Starting Monday

Walk-ins will be accepted from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday

April 26, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-to-accept-walk-ins-at-mass-covid-vaccination-sites-starting-monday/2495085/>

Starting Monday, suburban Cook County's mass COVID vaccination sites will begin accepting walk-ins.

The following mass vaccination sites will offer walk-ins:

- Tinley Park, 18451 Convention Center Drive (Moderna, age 18+)
- Matteson, 4647 Promenade Way (Pfizer, age 16+)
- River Grove- Triton College, 2000 5th Avenue (Pfizer, age 16+)
- South Holland- South Suburban College, 15800 State Street (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Des Plaines, 1155 E Oakton Street (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Forest Park, 7630 West Roosevelt Road (Pfizer, age 16+)

Walk-ins will be accepted from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, according to health officials. While individuals can now register at each site, appointments can still be made [online](#) or by calling 833-308-1988.

Matteson and Tinley Park began accepting walk-ins for vaccination last week. On Friday, the city of Chicago announced it will permit walk-in COVID vaccinations as availability allows.

With vaccine eligibility expanded citywide to include residents age 16 and 17, Chicago Department of Public Health Dr. Allison Arwady encouraged people to bring family members to walk-up and be vaccinated.

"Let's make this a family affair. Bring your parents, guardians, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and neighbors," Arwady said earlier in the week. "The only way we can stop this pandemic and get back to the things we love is for all Chicagoans to step up and get vaccinated."

Chicago Tribune

Coronavirus in Illinois updates: Here's what happened April 26 with COVID-19 in the Chicago area

April 26, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-aud-covid-19-pandemic-chicago-illinois-news-20210426-qfcvq4hewzcfneb7an5sv7q2ty-story.html>

The average number of COVID-19 vaccinations administered each day in Illinois has [dropped substantially](#) over the past week as the state reaches a turning point in its effort to get shots into arms. A daily average of 105,873 shots were administered in Illinois during the week ending Sunday, down from 125,212 a week earlier, a 15% drop.

The [decline](#) comes as Chicago-area mass vaccination sites have begun offering shots to walk-ins — a drastic shift from just a few weeks ago when it was still a grueling ordeal for many people to find an appointment.

Appointments won't be necessary at suburban Cook County mass vaccination sites starting Monday after they and the city said they are once again administering [the one-shot Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine](#). The sites will allow walk-ins with no previous appointments from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday. City mass vaccination sites already [opened to walk-ins on Friday](#), regardless of city ZIP code or employment status.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Coronavirus live blog, April 26, 2021: Walk-ins now welcome at all six COVID-19 mass vaccination sites in suburban Cook County

Here's Monday's news on how COVID-19 is impacting Chicago and Illinois. Follow here for live updates.

Apr 26, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/4/26/22403567/latest-coronavirus-news-live-updates-chicago-illinois-2021>

Starting Monday, all six COVID-19 mass vaccination sites in suburban Cook County will start accepting walk-in appointments.

While scheduling appointments in advance are still encouraged, walk-ins will be welcomed at the county's mass vaccination sites Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For help finding an appointment in Chicago, visit [zocdoc.com](https://www.zocdoc.com) or call (312) 746-4835.

For suburban Cook County sites, visit vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or call (833) 308-1988.

To find providers elsewhere, visit coronavirus.illinois.gov or call (833) 621-1284.



Cook County vaccine sites now accepting walk-ins

Jessica D'Onofrio and Michelle Gallardo

April 26, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/cook-co-vaccine-sites-accepting-walk-ins-starting-monday/10548737/>

Getting a COVID-19 shot has never been easier. As of Monday, all Cook County mass vaccination sites are open to walk-ins - and it certainly has been busy.

[Chicago was already accepting walk-ins](#) at all of its city-run sites. You can show up and register on-site, but appointments are still recommended.

Sites in [Tinley Park and Matteson has already started accepting walk-ins last week](#). They are now joined by sites in Des Plaines, Forest Park, River Grove and South Holland. Walk-ins are accepted from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

For those still having trouble scheduling that second dose at their original location, [Cook County vaccination sites will take any Illinois resident on a walk-in basis to get their second shot](#). Just make sure to bring your CDC card and verify that the location you want to go to offers the vaccine you need to complete the set.

Appointments can still be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Now people like Vito Messa from Norridge can simply walk into the Triton College site, register and get his shot on the spot.

"It's way convenient because like I said, I just passed by here so I didn't have to go out of my way to stop," Messa said.

Don Christiansen has had trouble scheduling his second shot. His whole family has been trying to help him find one close-by.

"I live in River Grove now," he said. "I'm 69 years old and it's been a pain in the butt to get a shot around here."

But health officials are now worrying about a growing trend: as more and more people seem to be missing out on getting their second dose.

More than half of all American adults have now gotten at least one shot of the COVID-19 vaccine and we're nearing a point where supply will outweigh demand. But there are new concerns, as the CDC released data showing that more than 5 million people have not gotten their second dose within the allotted time frame.

"The biggest problem is their immunity will wane faster, so we don't really know how long it lasts because we're not studying people who only got one shot," said Dr. Richard Novak, University of Illinois Health.

Dr. Novak led UI Health's Moderna and J&J vaccine trials in Chicago. He says, historically, it's been a challenge to get people to come in for booster shots of multi-dose vaccines. From that perspective, the existing 92% completion rate is considered quite good. And the number might be even higher.

"There are people who got their first shot in one location and in one type of location, let's say, a local health department. and they went and got their second shot at, let's say, a Walgreens. And as a result, at least initially, it's hard to reconcile that," Gov. Pritzker said.

Officials say there are a multitude of reasons why people may not be getting their second shots on time. Ranging from trouble scheduling and mix-ups like those reported at Walgreens nationwide, where people have been inadvertently sent to locations that do not offer the vaccine they need, to fear of side effects. Or even a mistaken belief that they have enough protection with just one dose.

"It's true the second dose has some side effects, but the whole point of getting vaccinated is to protect you from COVID and if you don't get both doses, your risk is still there of getting COVID," Novak said.

For Sherri Smith, who got her second dose on Monday, it just made sense.

"If you've had the initial shot, wouldn't you want to finish it? It's like going to Driver's Ed and you've taken the entire course, but now you don't go in and get the road test," Smith said.



Cook County now accepting vaccine walk-ins

April 26, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-now-accepting-vaccine-094821151.html>

Cook County Health is welcoming walking-ins at all of its mass vaccination sites starting Monday.

Video Transcript

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: Good morning, Carol. As you mentioned starting today, people can just walk in to get their shot. Cook County now allowing it at all of its mass vaccination sites like this one right behind me at Triton college. Chicago is already accepting walk ins at all of its city run sites. Now, you can show up and register on site but appointments are still recommended. This comes with a push to get more Americans fully vaccinated against covid-19.

The CDC saying millions of people are getting their first doses but skipping the second. Health experts say vaccine hesitancy could be to blame as there are some side effects being reported with the second shot.

ZACHARY RUBIN: With one dose of the mRNA vaccine, we don't have enough studies to see how much effect that has long term. We know that it does confer some effectiveness but it's definitely far less than getting a two dose seri.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 92% of people have completed the 2-dose series of Pfizer or Moderna, and 8% of those eligible, meaning \$5 million Americans may have missed their second dose. Authorities again, still working to figure out why people are skipping that second dose. As I mentioned, some of that could be vaccine hesitancy or problems accessing that second shot.



Residentes del condado de Cook pueden vacunarse sin cita previa en los seis centros de vacunación masiva

April 26, 2021

<https://www.univision.com/local/chicago-wqbo/residentes-del-condado-de-cook-pueden-vacunarse-sin-cita-previa-en-los-seis-centros-de-vacunacion-masiva-video>

A partir de este lunes, cualquier persona mayor de 16 años puede recibir la vacuna contra el coronavirus sin necesidad de agendar una cita. Los megacentros de vacunación del condado de Cook están ubicados en Tinley Park, Matteson, River Grove, South Holland, Des Plaines y Forest Park.



Cook County mass vaccination sites accepting walk-ins starting today

Joanie Lum

April 26, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-mass-vaccination-sites-accepting-walk-ins-starting-today>

All six [Cook County](#) mass vaccination sites are allowing walk-ins starting Monday as the state ramps up its distribution efforts.

The vaccination clinic in [Forest Park](#) is doing both appointments and walk ins. It has been busy but moving along, thanks to the healthcare professionals and assistance from the National Guard.

The process is a lot easier than it was a few weeks ago.

Now, everyone 16 and older in Cook County can get the [COVID-19 vaccine](#), no appointment necessary.

The Pfizer vaccine, which is approved for 16- and 17-year-olds, is being offered at Forest Park, Des Plaines, River Forest, South Suburban College and Matteson.

The Moderna vaccine is given at the Tinley Park Convention Center.

The Cook County mass vaccination centers are able to move people in and out quickly and safely, having administered thousands of shots per day.

The Cook County mass vaccination clinics are open from 8:30 a.m. through 5 p.m. Bring a photo ID to register on site.



Illinois Coronavirus Updates: Walk-Ins Accepted at Cook County Vaccination Sites

April 26, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-coronavirus-updates-cook-county-accepting-walk-ins-at-mass-vaccination-sites-pritzker-to-speak/2495083/>

Starting Monday, suburban Cook County's mass COVID vaccination sites will begin accepting walk-ins.

And some people who menstruate are reporting changes to their periods after getting vaccinated.

Here are the latest updates on the coronavirus pandemic across Illinois today:

Cook County to Accept Walk-Ins at Mass COVID Vaccination Sites Starting Monday

Starting Monday, [suburban Cook County's mass COVID vaccination sites](#) will begin accepting walk-ins.

The following mass vaccination sites will offer walk-ins:

- Tinley Park, 18451 Convention Center Drive (Moderna, age 18+)
- Matteson, 4647 Promenade Way (Pfizer, age 16+)
- River Grove- Triton College, 2000 5th Avenue (Pfizer, age 16+)
- South Holland- South Suburban College, 15800 State Street (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Des Plaines, 1155 E Oakton Street (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Forest Park, 7630 West Roosevelt Road (Pfizer, age 16+)

Walk-ins will be accepted from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, according to health officials. While individuals can now register at each site, appointments can still be made [online](#) or by calling 833-308-1988.



Walk-in COVID-19 vaccines begin at 6 Cook County locations

Glenn Marshall

April 26, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/walk-in-covid-19-vaccines-begin-at-6-cook-county-locations/>

For those still looking for a COVID-19 vaccine, waiting on the phone and refreshing your web browser is no longer necessary if you're in Cook County.

Walk-in appointments are now optional at Tinley Park, Matteson, River Grove, South Holland, Des Plaines and Forest Park. Certain locations will offer both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

Cook County's largest vaccination site at the United Center already accepts walk-ins.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is expected to make a return to sites soon as well, with the potential for the Tinley Park Convention Center to start using the vaccine soon.

Close to 24 percent of Illinois residents have completed their vaccinations, with almost 41 percent having at least one shot of a vaccine.

Walk-in appointments are available at the following locations:

- Tinley Park Convention Center – 18451 Convention Center Drive, Tinley Park, IL 60477
- Former Target store – 4647 Promenade Way, Matteson, IL 60443
- Triton College – 2000 5th Avenue, River Grove, IL 60171
- South Suburban College – 15800 State Street, South Holland, IL 60473
- Former Kmart store – 1155 East Oakton Street, Des Plaines, IL 60018
- Former HOBLO store – 7600 West Roosevelt Road, Forest Park, IL 60130

The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for 16 and 17 year olds. Individuals age 16 and 17 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Individuals can still make appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7AM – 10PM and Saturday from 8AM – 10PM.

Hours of sites are subject to change, visit <https://cookcountyhealth.org/covid19-vaccine-sites/> for updated hours of operation.

The mobile vaccination site in Summit will continue to offer walk-in availability, however it is generally limited to individuals in the surrounding communities: Summit, McCook, Hodgkins, Justice, Bridgeview and Chicago Ridge.



Cook County expands walk-in availability to all 6 mass vaccination sites starting Monday

April 25, 2021

<https://www.audacy.com/wbbm780/news/local/cook-county-opens-mass-vaccination-sites-to-walk-ins-monday>

If you've had a hard time finding a convenient appointment to get a COVID-19 vaccination, that should be less of a problem now if you live in Cook County, as walk-ins will now be accepted at all six suburban Cook County mass vaccination sites starting Monday.

Starting Monday, April 26, all Cook County Health mass vaccination sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday for walk-ins.

The Tinley Park and Matteson sites first opened for walk-ins on April 21. But now, four more sites offer that service, including:

- Tinley Park, 18451 Convention Center Drive (Moderna, age 18+)
- Matteson, 4647 Promenade Way (Pfizer, age 16+)
- River Grove- Triton College, 2000 5th Avenue (Pfizer, age 16+)
- South Holland- South Suburban College, 15800 State Street (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Des Plaines, 1155 E Oakton Street (Pfizer, age 16+)
- Forest Park, 7630 West Roosevelt Road (Pfizer, age 16+)

Individuals or groups who are interested in getting a vaccine can simply show up and register onsite.

At this time, Cook County Health is only using Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for 16- and 17-year olds. As such, it is important for these individuals to walk-in or make an appointment at a Pfizer site. Cook County Health notes that individuals age 16 and 17 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Individuals can still make appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Additionally, Cook County Health's mobile vaccination site in Summit will continue to offer walk-in availability; however, it is generally limited to individuals in the surrounding communities: Summit, McCook, Hodgkins, Justice, Bridgeview, and Chicago Ridge.



Cook County to open its mass vaccination sites to walk-ins starting Monday

Nancy Harty

April 25, 2021

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/cook-county-to-open-its-mass-vaccination-sites-to-walk-ins-starting-monday/ar-BB1q2k3X>

In a sign that COVID-19 vaccine supply has caught up to — or overtaken — demand, Cook County is opening all its mass vaccination sites to walk-ins beginning Monday.

Those wishing to get vaccinated will no longer need an appointment to get the shot at Triton College in River Grove, a former Kmart in Des Plaines, South Suburban College in South Holland or the old HOBLO store in Forest Park.

Cook County Health is accepting walk-ins at those four locations plus sites in Tinley Park and south suburban Matteson that waived appointments last week.

They're administering Pfizer vaccines at all but one location, so anyone age 16 and older can come but minors will need to bring a parent.

The old Target location in Matteson is giving Moderna shots, which are approved for people 18 and older.



No Appointment Necessary

April 26, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/video/5526115-no-appointment-necessary/>



Suburban Cook County health leaders want you to know it will be easier than ever to get your COVID-19 shot.



Tinley Park COVID-19 Vaccination Site To Offer Single-Dose Johnson & Johnson Site Starting Wednesday

April 27, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/27/tinley-park-covid-19-vaccination-site-johnson-johnson/>

Those who would rather have the single-dose Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine can get it at the Tinley Park mass vaccination site starting on Wednesday.

Cook County Health will offer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at the site at 18451 Convention Center Dr. in Tinley Park. The two-dose Moderna shot will also be available.

Those who come to the site may choose which vaccine they prefer. The site is open for appointments and walk-ins for anyone 18 or older.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave the green light to [resuming administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine last week](#), after a pause due to a handful of blood clot cases.

Meanwhile, Cook County Health noted that the Matteson mass vaccination site at 4647 Promenade Way in Matteson will be changing effective Friday. The hours will now be 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday to accommodate those who cannot come for the vaccine during normal business hours.

The Matteson site offers the Pfizer vaccine, which can be given to those 16 and over. A parent or guardian must accompany those who are 16 or 17.

While [walk-ins are welcome](#) at all Cook County Health mass-vaccination sites, appointments can still be made by going to vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.



Mondays Deemed 'Restaurant Day' at Cook County Mass Vaccination Sites: Officials

April 28, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/mondays-deemed-restaurant-day-at-cook-county-mass-vaccination-sites-officials/2497557/>

Health officials deemed Mondays as "Restaurant Days" at Cook County mass COVID vaccination sites, with aims to provide vaccines to food service employees.

Beginning May 3, Cook County Health announced officials will specifically encourage all restaurant workers to receive vaccines at area vaccination locations.

Here's where to get a vaccine in the county:

Tinley Park

Address: 18451 Convention Center Dr.

Vaccine: Moderna

Hours: Wednesday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Matteson

Address: 4647 Promenade Way

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Wednesday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

River Grove

Address: 2000 5th Avenue, Triton College

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Forest Park

Address: 7630 W. Roosevelt Rd.

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Des Plaines

Address: 1155 E Oakton Street

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

South Holland

Address: 15800 State Street, South Suburban College

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All the above locations offer both appointment-based and walk-in vaccinations, according to the county.

Officials noted that 16 and 17-year-olds will not be eligible at the Tinley Park location as the Pfizer vaccine is the only option currently approved for emergency use in that age group. Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Click [here](#) for more information on booking an appointment in Cook County, or call (833) 308-1988.



COVID-19 Contact Tracers Starting To Expand Work To Include Encouraging Vaccinations

Tim McNicholas

April 29, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/29/covid-19-contact-tracing-tracers-encouraging-vaccinations/>

Even as the CDC relaxes some COVID-19 guidelines, city and county officials say contact tracing is still going strong. Some contact tracers even have expanded their roles to include vaccine work.

CBS 2 Morning Insider Tim McNicholas shows us how it's working.

"Right now, we're still seeing significant numbers of new cases being reported on a daily basis," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead and senior medical officer for the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Rubin said, if COVID cases drop significantly in the coming months, the number of contact tracers could drop too. But for now, it's full speed ahead.

"We are also using our tracers to engage individuals in talking about vaccination and encouraging vaccination," Rubin said.

Data from the State of Illinois shows the Cook County health department has attempted to reach 32 percent of positive COVID cases, and they've successfully interviewed about 22 percent.

That's below the statewide average of 70 percent attempted, and 53 percent interviewed.

But the county sent us numbers only from 2021, showing a strong improvement.

"You shouldn't be looking at those statistics that go back 6 to 8 months. You should be seeing what we're really doing since we've been able to ramp up our full workforce," Rubin said.

The county says they've tried to reach 72 percent of cases since Jan. 1, and interviewed 50 percent.

For close contacts of those cases, they've tried 90 percent, and interviewed 74 percent.

"Contact tracing is a really hard job," said Dr. Emily Gurley, who teaches a free contact tracing course with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Gurley said health departments across the U.S. have had their hands full.

"As more and more people are vaccinated, hopefully we'll have less transmission, but we do have a virus that's mutating," she said.

With 32 million total cases in the U.S., and nearly one in ten having tested positive at some point, is contact tracing still worth it? Gurley says absolutely.

"That just means the contact tracing programs we have aren't enough to completely stop transmission, but that doesn't mean they're not preventing cases and deaths," Gurley said.

Gurley expects that, as more people get vaccinated, the caseload will be more manageable for contact tracing programs in Cook County and beyond.

State data also shows the city lagging behind the Illinois average for cases and contacts interviewed, but the city says that doesn't include the automated messages they are sending out for positive cases.

Daily Herald

Average of shots in arms falls below 100,000 as demand tapers off

Marni Pyke

April 30, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210429/average-of-shots-in-arms-falls-below-100000-as-demand-tapers-off>

Illinois' seven-day average of administered COVID-19 vaccine shots fell below 100,000, the lowest level in a month, state public health officials reported Thursday.

On Wednesday, 107,689 COVID-19 shots were administered, but the seven-day average for vaccinations is 97,434, officials said. Vaccination seven-day averages hit a peak of more than 132,000 April 11 through 13 and have declined since. The last time the tally dipped under 100,000 was on March 26 with 99,936 shots.

The shift has various causes: breaking through a demand bottleneck when supplies were low, the 10-day pause of Johnson & Johnson's one-dose vaccines to examine side effects, and vaccine skepticism, experts said.

"The public health community knew we would reach the point where we vaccinated those who had every intention of being vaccinated, and we know there is still hesitancy among others to get the COVID-19 vaccine," said Iliana Mora, Cook County Health's chief operating officer for ambulatory services.

"J&J being offline" was the first factor the Chicago Medical Society's Dr. Vishnu Chun gave at a Cook County Public Health Department event Thursday.

"The second and what I think is the really hard aspect of it is hesitancy -- and much more than hesitancy," Chun said. "It's just people want the easiest way to get vaccines. People want to be able to go for a regular checkup and get a vaccine."

"Now we have to change hearts and minds," Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said.

The federal government has delivered 11,546,345 doses of vaccine to Illinois since distribution began in mid-December, and 9,155,989 shots have been administered.

So far, 3,966,970 people -- 31.1% of Illinois' 12.7 million population -- have been fully vaccinated. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses several weeks apart.

Illinois hospitals were treating 2,115 COVID-19 patients Wednesday night.

The state's positivity rate for COVID-19 cases is 3.5% based on a seven-day average.

State officials on Thursday announced 3,394 new cases in the previous 24 hours and 38 deaths, 21 of them in Chicago and the suburban counties.

Total cases statewide stand at 1,331,848 and 21,927 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

Labs processed 89,057 virus tests in the last 24 hours.



What Should I Do With My COVID-19 Vaccination Card?

Kristen Thometz

April 29, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/04/29/what-should-i-do-my-covid-19-vaccination-card>

More than 9 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in the state of Illinois. And with each coveted shot comes a vaccination card.

While people are told to bring their vaccination cards to their second appointment (if they received a two-dose shot), not much else is said about what to do with those cards.

So, we asked local doctors, federal, state and local health officials for guidance.

What is a COVID-19 vaccination card, and how do I get one?

A vaccine card identifies you by name and date of birth and provides information about the vaccine you received, including the date or dates in which you got the shot, which vaccine it was and where it was administered.

When you receive the vaccine, you'll be given the card automatically. You should not have to ask for it and you should not be asked to pay for it.

Do they look different depending on what shot I get or where I get it?

All Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 vaccine cards look the same regardless of the setting in which you were vaccinated, according to Illinois Department of Public Health spokesperson Melaney Arnold.

Can I buy a COVID-19 vaccination card?

No. Any social media posts or companies advertising blank CDC vaccination cards are fake, according to [Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul's office](#). Legitimate vaccination cards are given by providers when they administer the vaccine.

Spotting fakes can be difficult "because it's just a piece of paper," said Dr. Susan Bleasdale, medical director of infection prevention and control at UI Health. But the information the cards contain, like the vaccine's lot number and where it was given, can be validated, according to Bleasdale.

"I'm not sure why someone would want to replicate cards because the vaccine is not required. Maybe because some employers require it now," she said.

I didn't get a vaccination card at my appointment. How can I get one?

The CDC recommends contacting the vaccination provider where you got your shot. You can also request a proof of vaccination from the Illinois Department of Public Health, which keeps records of patients' immunizations in its Illinois Comprehensive Automated Immunization Registry Exchange, or I-CARE, database. You can request that information by [submitting an immunization record request](#).

What should I do if lost my card?

Start by requesting a copy of your records from the provider who vaccinated you. “If you lost your card, we can give you a new one,” said Bleasdale.

Regardless of where you were vaccinated — whether it was in a physician’s office, a pharmacy or mass vaccination site — providers will be able to supply you with proof of vaccination such as a printout of your immunization record from the state’s I-CARE database, according to Dr. Jacqueline Korpics, medical director of the Cook County Department of Public Health’s COVID-19 response.

Chicagoans can request a copy of their vaccination records from the Chicago Department of Public Health by emailing covid19vaccine@cityofchicago.org.

If you enrolled in the CDC’s [V-safe](#) or [VaxText](#) programs after your first vaccine dose, you can use them to access your vaccination information.

If you didn’t register for either program or can’t remember your registration code, you can request your vaccination information from the state by [submitting an immunization record request](#).

Should I carry my vaccine card with me?

No. “Keep the original in a safe place next to other important documents,” said Korpics.

How can I prove my vaccination status without carrying my card everywhere?

“On the whole, proof of vaccination is not being required at this time,” said Arnold. “IDPH is evaluating ways to provide vaccine verification to the public.”

[Chicago officials plan to launch a vaccination passport](#) that would provide vaccinated residents with a “Vax Pass” to attend summer events and concerts like Lollapalooza. A formal announcement is expected in May.

The CDC advises snapping a photo of the card to use as a backup copy. But don’t share photos of your card on social media. Scammers can use your name, birthdate, the location of where you got the shot and metadata from photos to get your contact information, according to [Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul](#).

Should I laminate my vaccine card?

The answer isn’t clear.

“You may choose to if you would like, but we do not recommend carrying the original around with you,” said Korpics.

While lamination protects the card from the elements, there are blank spaces for potential vaccine boosters, according to Bleasdale.

IDPH says research is still being conducted on the need for a booster dose and more information about documentation will be available when a recommendation is made.

If boosters are needed, they will be recorded in the state’s I-CARE system, so don’t sweat it if you’ve already laminated your card or plan to.

Alternatives to laminating cards include placing them in Ziploc bags or picture frames, and some stores have started selling plastic vaccination card protectors.

Chicago Tribune

Chicago will reopen United Center, expand outdoor festivals, allow more people indoors as Mayor Lori Lightfoot eases COVID-19 restrictions

Gregory Pratt and Alice Yin

April 29, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-chicago-lightfoot-reopening-phase-four-20210429-nrhz42yfi5flpmpepqdf7vji-am-story.html>

Chicago sports fans are set to return to the United Center next month for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic started, officials announced Thursday, among other loosened restrictions touted as the latest step toward a normal summer with more bustle and less isolation.

The city also is relaxing its pandemic rules on indoor gatherings, such as the number of people allowed inside bars, restaurants and churches, Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced Thursday. Outdoor events including farmers markets, festivals and outdoor shows also will be increasing capacity, Lightfoot said.

"I believe that the summer of 2021 will look more like '19 than '20," Lightfoot said, echoing a common catchphrase of hers while keeping mum on hotly anticipated annual bashes such as Lollapalooza. "With our announcement today, I think we're signaling we feel very optimistic about what the summer is going to look like, including some big events, and that's as far as I'll go today."

The United Center, home of the Chicago Bulls and Blackhawks, and other large indoor venues will be allowed to open at 25% capacity. In a news release, the [Blackhawks said their first home game open](#) to fans will be May 9 against the Dallas Stars, and the [Bulls' will be May 7](#) against the Boston Celtics.

Large indoor venues for meetings, conference rooms and conventions can now operate at the lesser of 25% capacity or 250 people, the city said. Large houses of worship also will be allowed to operate at 25% capacity, the city said.

Guests at private events, such as weddings, who are fully vaccinated will not count toward capacity limits if they are two weeks past their final vaccine dose, the city said.

Lightfoot officials also announced that festivals and general admission outdoor events can now operate with 15 people per 1,000 square feet. Farmers markets and flea markets will be allowed to operate at 25% capacity or 15 people per 1,000 square feet, the city said.

Organizers of Chicago's largest music festival, Lollapalooza, have not announced 2021 plans. But promoter C3 Presents is "optimistic" the fest will return to Chicago this summer.

"We are excited about the progress in Chicago as the city continues to reopen," C3 said in a statement Thursday. "We are in close contact with city and public health officials as we continue to plan for the festival and remain optimistic about Lollapalooza 2021 in Grant Park. We encourage fans to do their part in contributing to the forward progress by getting a vaccination as soon as you can."

Lightfoot's eased restrictions bring the city in line with state rules. The latest steps toward reopening come after the city postponed further moves due to a spike in COVID-19 cases. But city officials said they feel confident making the moves due to improvements in metrics, including a decrease in the number of people testing positive for the virus, and continued vaccine distribution.

As part of the reopening plan announced Thursday, [the Windy City Smokeout, scheduled for July 8-11](#) at the United Center, will be the first street festival to resume this year. Officials said they expect up to 12,500 people per day, and it will take place in the arena's parking lot.

All vendors, performers and staff will be required to be fully vaccinated, the city said. Attendees must show proof of vaccination or, if they aren't inoculated, present proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within three days of entry to the event, according to a statement from Lettuce Entertain You. Proof of either status must be uploaded to a "Health Pass" used by the CLEAR smartphone application, the company said.

Nevertheless, Lightfoot and Chicago public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady sought to clarify their remarks from [earlier in the week](#) regarding the city's consideration of trying to entice vaccine stragglers to get inoculated. On [Tuesday](#) and [Wednesday](#) they previewed a so-called Vax Pass incentive, expected to roll out in May, that would provide vaccinated people with access and preferred seating at concerts and other events. "There is no passport," Lightfoot said Thursday.

Arwady, meanwhile Thursday, said she doesn't consider the Vax Pass a "vaccine passport" but rather an incentive to get the shot. She gave an example of someone getting vaccinated and having an "opportunity" to get tickets to concerts that are "open to people who are vaccinated with not all the requirements in place related to masking and social distancing."

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And starting July 11, the city will shut down vehicle traffic on North State Street from Madison to Lake streets on "select" Sundays throughout the summer to promote outdoor festivities that will be run by the Chicago Loop Alliance. Dubbed "Sundays on State," the closures will last from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., with programming for pedestrians spanning 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., according to the organization's [website](#).

Arwady said the latest move toward loosening restrictions is because of the past couple of weeks of progress in COVID-19 metrics following a third surge that began in March. Both the seven-day rolling average of daily positive cases and the positivity rate have declined, to 527 and 4.7%, respectively, according to Wednesday's data.

The first figure still isn't ideal, Arwady said, as she prefers a caseload under 400. But the intensive care unit occupation also beginning to stabilize at a seven-day average of 145 beds per day as of Tuesday was "the ticket to reopening," she said.

Arwady, along with Business Affairs and Consumer Protection Commissioner Rosa Escareño, also predicted that should COVID-19 metrics continue improving, the city will be on track to move into Gov. J.B. Pritzker's "bridge" phase for further reopening in two weeks.

Asked if Chicago is looking at potentially a full reopening, as New York City is planning to do by July 1, Lightfoot said the city feels like it's moving "in that trajectory," but her approach has been cautious and data-driven to avoid disappointing businesses. Arwady added it's likely by summer that, if current vaccination and case numbers continue along their current trajectory, the city may be in position for a full reopening over the summer.

The city's new mitigations were mostly [mirrored](#) by a Thursday announcement from the Cook County Department of Public Health, which oversees the suburbs. Starting Friday, that jurisdiction will have the same loosening of indoor restaurant capacity and outdoor festivals in addition to not counting fully vaccinated people toward capacity for private events, among other measures.

The county also teased that in two weeks, there could be further reopening. But Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha Jr. said that those changes will be contingent on COVID-19 metrics declining or stabilizing.

"I don't want to give more than we can offer other than to just say that in two weeks we're going to be evaluating," Rocha said. "We hope slowly every day to be making it a little easier for us to return back to where we were before COVID."



Cook County to 'Ease' Phase 4 Mitigations as COVID Cases Decline, Vaccinations Increase

Chicago on Thursday also issued its reopening plan, which allows for fans to return to the United Center and the revival of some summer festivals.

April 29, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-to-ease-phase-4-mitigations-as-covid-cases-decline-vaccinations-increase/2498320/>

The Cook County Department of Public Health on Thursday issued revised COVID-19 Phase 4 reopening guidance that eases some mitigations while taking "a cautious approach to reopening suburban Cook County."

The guidance, issued the same day as [the city of Chicago](#) released [its reopening plan](#), becomes effective on Friday, April 30.

"We're able to ease mitigations within Phase 4 for a number of reasons," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, in a statement, "including a recent decline in cases, hospitalizations and deaths, as well as nearly one million residents, or more than 50 percent of eligible residents 16 years and older of suburban Cook County who have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine."

The new changes to the current Phase 4 guidelines include:

Increased indoor restaurant capacity to 50 percent capacity or 100 individuals, whichever is smaller.

Outdoor social events, such as weddings, proms and potlucks increase to lesser of 50% capacity or 100 people.

Fully vaccinated people will be exempt from the capacity count for private social events, such as weddings.

Higher capacity for indoor and outdoor seated spectator events, theater and performing arts in large venues (ticketed and seated) with a capacity of 200 or more to 25 percent. Indoor events with capacity less than 200 stay at 50 percent capacity with no more than 50 people.

Festivals and general admission outdoor spectator events increase to 15 people per 1,000 square feet.

Further easing of these mitigations is "14 days of stable/declining metrics including decreasing hospitalizations, and COVID case counts and positivity rates," Dr. Rubin said.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Shot, please! Preckwinkle pushes vaccinations for restaurant workers as indoor capacity expands

Mitchell Armentrout

April 29, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/4/29/22409792/illinois-coronavirus-vaccine-cases-deaths-reopen-pritzker-covid-19-april-29>

Public health officials in Cook County are serving up COVID-19 vaccines to bar and restaurant workers as the suburbs follow in lockstep with Chicago's latest round of eased coronavirus restrictions.

Mondays in May will be designated "restaurant days" at the county's six suburban mass vaccination sites, Cook County Board Presidents Toni Preckwinkle announced Thursday.

Anyone can sign up for an appointment or [walk up to the six sites](#) in Tinley Park, Matteson, River Grove, South Holland, Des Plaines or Forest Park. But officials want to vaccinate as many of the "essential heroes" in the hospitality industry as possible with indoor capacity expanding to the lesser of 50% or 100 people per room.

"Restaurant staff people worked tirelessly, even as they were asked to pivot to new roles to meet new demands, even as hours were cut, doors were closed, and their own life livelihoods were in jeopardy," Preckwinkle said. "Now we're starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel, and people are returning toward cafes and restaurants for a sense of normal normalcy and camaraderie that we all have craved."

An estimated 20% of restaurants statewide won't survive the pandemic, according to Illinois Restaurant Association President Sam Toia, shuttering about 5,000 businesses and leaving more than 100,000 out of work.

"We were the first industry to be shut down, and probably will be one of the last industries to truly reopen and recover. Vaccinations are absolutely crucial to help drive our COVID numbers back down and get our guests back in restaurants," Toia said.

The restaurant shot push comes as public health officials face their latest challenge in the pandemic with demand for vaccine slowing across Illinois.

"Most individuals who absolutely knew ahead that they wanted the shot have had the chance to get one," Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said. "Now we have to change hearts and minds to encourage individuals who have not yet made the decision to get vaccinated."

Almost a third of all Illinois residents are fully vaccinated, and about half have gotten at least one dose, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health, which reported 107,689 more shots went into arms statewide on Wednesday.

But the state is now averaging just 97,434 shots administered per day over the past week — the first time that rate has fallen below 100,000 in a month, and a 27% decrease compared to the all-time high of almost 133,000 the state reported two and a half weeks ago.

"This will be an uphill climb, but we are committed to doing everything we can to get people vaccinated and remove barriers to access," Rocha said.

As part of that effort, city officials announced the Chicago State University mass vaccination site is now offering the one-and-done Johnson & Johnson vaccine in its drive-thru facility, no appointments required. Pfizer shots are also available.

Still, "we're not out of this yet," Preckwinkle warned.

The state reported 3,394 new cases of the disease Thursday, the most logged in a single day in about two weeks. They were diagnosed among 89,057 tests, raising Illinois average positivity rate to 3.5%. That figure is still down about 20% overall since April 12.

Officials also reported the disease killed 28 more residents, including a Cook County man in his 30s.

More than 1.3 million people have tested positive statewide over the last 13 months, and 21,927 of them have died.

For help finding a vaccination appointment in Chicago, visit [zocdoc.com](https://www.zocdoc.com) or call (312) 746-4835.

For suburban Cook County sites, visit vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or call (833) 308-1988.

To find providers elsewhere, visit coronavirus.illinois.gov or call (833) 621-1284.



Cook County Health launches 'Restaurant Worker Day' Mondays to aid vaccinations among industry

Rob Sneed

April 29, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-launches-restaurant-worker-day-mondays-to-aid-vaccinations-among-industry/>

Suburban Cook County is set to loosen COVID-19 restrictions beginning Friday. It's part of a major push to get more restaurant workers vaccinated to allow communities to reopen.

Running a restaurant during the pandemic hasn't been easy, some owners say, but any step back to normalcy is a good one.

"I think it's time for restaurants to be able to give back to their business," said Michael Jones, a Firehouse customer. "Restaurants has such an impact on a local community, local employment and in taxes."

Jones looked back over the last year and remembered how hard it was for restaurants. It's why he says he's not taking for granted the opportunity to eat inside one of his favorite restaurants, Firehouse in Evanston.

On Thursday, the Cook County Department of Public Health revised their Phase 4 reopening guidelines to kick off the next day. The news comes after 14 days of stable and/or declining hospitalizations and COVID-19 case counts and positivity rates in the county.

The eased mitigations include:

Increased indoor restaurant capacity to 50 percent capacity or 100 individuals, whichever is smaller.

Outdoor social events, such as weddings, proms and potlucks increase to lesser of 50% capacity or 100 people.

Higher capacity for indoor and outdoor seated spectator events, theater and performing arts in large venues

Festivals and general admission outdoor spectator events increase to 15 people per 1,000 square feet.

The ease in restrictions is good news for Jones' favorite restaurant and its owner.

"We are really excited," says Firehouse owner Pat Fowler. "We, in the past year, feel we have gone above and beyond for the safety of our guests and customers. We are excited that restaurants like ours have done the work so that we can reopen into this phase."

To aid the restaurant industry in their vaccine efforts, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle announced all six COVID mass vaccination sites would recognize Mondays as 'Restaurant Worker Day.'

The goal is to get more individuals vaccinated.

"It's imperative that we get all residents of Cook County who are eligible vaccinated against COVID-19," Preckwinkle said. "We had to do our part to protect our family friends communities."

Walk-ins are welcome at all Cook County Health mass vaccination sites. Individuals can still make appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. – 10 p.m.

Daily Herald

Cook County easing restrictions on outdoor activities, proms, weddings, more

Marni Pyke

April 30, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210429/cook-county-easing-restrictions-on-outdoor-activities-proms-weddings-more>

Relaxed restrictions on outdoor activities will allow more suburban Cook County residents to participate in outdoor festivals, proms and weddings, public health officials said Thursday.

The Cook County Department of Public Health announced changes effective Friday and resulting from decreasing COVID-19 cases, including severe ones. The state is currently in [Phase 4](#) of the reopening.

"We're able to ease mitigations within Phase 4 for a number of reasons, including a recent decline in cases, hospitalizations and deaths, as well as nearly 1 million residents, or more than 50% of eligible residents, who have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Cook County's senior public health medical officer.

The latest rules affecting outdoor events allow up to 100 people or 50% of capacity, whichever is less, at occasions such as weddings, proms and potlucks.

Fully vaccinated people will be exempted from capacity counts for private social gatherings.

The county is also raising capacity for indoor and outdoor concerts, plays and other performances in large spaces.

But at smaller indoor venues, accommodating less than 200 people, rules remain in place requiring 50% capacity with no more than 50 people.

In addition, indoor restaurant capacity will increase to 50% capacity or 100 customers, whichever is less.

Cook County health officials also announced that all Mondays in May, starting May 3, will be Restaurant Worker Vaccination Day to help an industry hard hit by the pandemic.

The county's six mass vaccination sites will be open to all restaurant workers in Illinois 16 years and older. "There are plenty of appointments if people want to book in advance for convenience, but they can also walk in," a spokeswoman said.



Chicago will reopen United Center, expand outdoor festivals, allow more people indoors as Mayor Lori Lightfoot eases COVID-19 restrictions

Gregory Pratt, Chicago Tribune

April 29, 2021

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/chicago-will-reopen-united-center-expand-outdoor-festivals-allow-more-people-indoors-as-mayor-lori-lightfoot-eases-covid-19-restrictions/ar-BB1qbx7y>

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Navy Pier will partially reopen starting Friday, with fireworks throughout May, as announced earlier this month, and Buckingham Fountain will flow once again to kick off the summer.

And starting July 11, the city will shut down vehicle traffic on North State Street from Madison to Lake streets on "select" Sundays throughout the summer to promote outdoor festivities that will be run by the Chicago Loop Alliance. Dubbed "Sundays on State," the closures will last from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., with programming for pedestrians spanning 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., according to the organization's [website](#).

Arwady said the latest move toward loosening restrictions is because of the past couple of weeks of progress in COVID-19 metrics following a third surge that began in March. Both the seven-day rolling average of daily positive cases and the positivity rate have declined, to 527 and 4.7%, respectively, according to Wednesday's data.

The first figure still isn't ideal, Arwady said, as she prefers a caseload under 400. But the intensive care unit occupation also beginning to stabilize at a seven-day average of 145 beds per day as of Tuesday was "the ticket to reopening," she said.

Arwady, along with Business Affairs and Consumer Protection Commissioner Rosa Escareño, also predicted that should COVID-19 metrics continue improving, the city will be on track to move into Gov. J.B. Pritzker's "bridge" phase for further reopening in two weeks.

Asked if Chicago is looking at potentially a full reopening, as New York City is planning to do by July 1, Lightfoot said the city feels like it's moving "in that trajectory," but her approach has been cautious and data-driven to avoid disappointing businesses. Arwady added it's likely by summer that, if current vaccination and case numbers continue along their current trajectory, the city may be in position for a full reopening over the summer.

The city's new mitigations were mostly [mirrored](#) by a Thursday announcement from the Cook County Department of Public Health, which oversees the suburbs. Starting Friday, that jurisdiction will have the same loosening of indoor

restaurant capacity and outdoor festivals in addition to not counting fully vaccinated people toward capacity for private events, among other measures.

The county also teased that in two weeks, there could be further reopening. But Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha Jr. said that those changes will be contingent on COVID-19 metrics declining or stabilizing.

“I don’t want to give more than we can other than to just say that in two weeks we’re going to be evaluating,” Rocha said. “We hope slowly every day to be making it a little easier for us to return back to where we were before COVID.”



ILLINOIS PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS CONSIDERING 'VACCINE PASSPORT'

Ann Miller and Patrick Andriesen

April 30, 2021

<https://www.illinoispolicy.org/former-chicago-ald-richard-munoz-indicted-on-fraud-charges/>

Illinois public health officials considering 'vaccine passport'

Earlier this week, Dr. Allison Arwady, Chicago's public health commissioner, said the "Vax Pass" will be required to attend concerts and other summer events starting in May.

Days after Chicago officials floated the idea of requiring vaccine passports, Illinois public health officials revealed they're also considering a "[vaccine passport](#)" for residents.

"Vaccinated individuals may want to be able to prove they have been vaccinated, especially if they misplace their CDC vaccination card," Melanie Arnold, spokesperson for Illinois Department Public Health (IDPH) [told](#) reporters at the Daily Herald. "IDPH is working to provide this service to individuals."

Earlier this week, Dr. Allison Arwady, Chicago's public health commissioner, said the "[Vax Pass](#)" will be required to attend concerts and other summer events starting in May as a means of incentivizing young Illinoisans to get vaccinated.

"You get a vaccine, you'll be able to get into a concert or get into an event," Arwady said. "(We're) really thinking, particularly for younger people, how can we make vaccines something that people are excited about getting?"

The "Vax Pass" was one of many initiatives the city is pursuing to encourage vaccination, she said. Chicago will not require residents to get vaccinated, except to attend these events.

She said she views the idea as a public health measure: "We all want to put this behind us and getting people vaccinated is the way to do this, so I don't think of it as a bribe."

State officials in New York have pursued similar measures, recently unveiling a smartphone app that allows residents to prove their vaccination status.

Security experts and civil rights advocates, however, have argued incentives and implementing such programs would create an array of privacy and logistical concerns, particularly with digital passports.

"The concern there is (phone) apps often function in a way that collects information and location data about people, and we've always said no passport should be all digital," said Ed Yohnka, spokesman for the Illinois chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

"There may be some benefit of a passport, but not to have it synced up to a device that tells everyone in the world where we are," Yohnka said.

Currently, there is no standardized form of a vaccination card. Some Illinoisans receive cards, others paper sheets, and others only have it documented in their online medical records.

“The government is not now, nor will we be, supporting a system that required Americans to carry a credential,” [said](#) even White House spokesperson Jen Psaki, citing privacy concerns or the potential for vaccine passports to be “used against people unfairly.” [_](#)

The idea has even led to division between Illinois public health departments.

Spokesperson for Lake County Health Department Hannah Goering has [stated](#): “Lake County is not pursuing having their own passport system. We are focusing our efforts on education at the grass-roots level to help address the causes of vaccine hesitancy.”

Cook County officials, on the other hand, are considering and “support a statewide vaccination passport program,” [said](#) agency co-lead Dr. Rachel Rubin.

The debate over the efficacy of vaccine passports will no doubt carry on as the nation emerges from COVID. And these questions about privacy, security and digital autonomy must be answered in a way that keeps as many Americans healthy as possible while protecting their fundamental freedoms.



Cook County Opens Registration For Homebound Vaccination Program

April 30, 2021

Press Release from the City of Park Ridge

<https://patch.com/illinois/parkridge/cook-county-opens-registration-homebound-vaccination-program>

Call or make an appointment online if you are home bound and in need of an at-home vaccine appointment.

Homebound Vaccination Program

Sign up by calling: 833-308-1988

Hotline hours are M-F 7am-10pm and Sat 8am-10pm

Or, sign up online: <http://bit.ly/homevaccine>

South Suburban College vaccination site now open for walk-ins (free content)

April 30, 2021

<https://www.hfchronicle.com/public/2021/apr/30/south-suburban-college-vaccination>

Cook County's mass vaccination site at South Suburban College's gymnasium is now open for walk-in service.

Anyone 16 or older may get vaccinated between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday. No special residency, preregistration nor appointments are required. Anyone ages 16 and 17 should be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

While walk-ins are currently being vaccinated with little or no wait times, appointments may also be scheduled at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov.

South Suburban College, 15800 South State St. in South Holland, was the third large-scale vaccination site Cook County launched in February. The National Guard now administers up to 1,200 Pfizer vaccines per day at the site.

The college also continues to maintain its COVID-19 drive-thru testing services from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Public Health.

No appointment is necessary for the drive-thru tents set up at the college's main campus northwest parking lot. Testing site inquiries may be made by calling 888-297-7208.



Pfizer vs. Moderna Vaccines: Does One Have More Side Effects Than the Other?

Here's a breakdown of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, their potential side effects

April 30, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/pfizer-vs-moderna-vaccines-does-one-have-more-side-effects-than-the-other/2499425/>

As many continue receiving their first or second doses of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID vaccines currently available, what are the potential side effects and does one cause more side effects than the other?

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady was recently asked that very question.

There have also been reports of potential symptoms like "COVID arm" or changes in menstrual cycles.

Here's what we know so far about the two mRNA vaccines and their side effects:

What are the potential side effects?

Side effects are possible after receiving any COVID vaccine currently being administered in the U.S.

Experiencing side effects isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it's a sign your body is responding.

"That's just your immune system learning the lesson of how to fight it off," Chicago's top doctor said in a Facebook Live Tuesday. "So people who have stronger side effects, it's just a sign that you have a very robust strong immune system that's learning the lesson."

The CDC reports the most common side effects for the vaccines is at the injection site. They include:

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling

Common side effects in the body include:

- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Nausea

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises people to stick around for 15 minutes after vaccination, and those with a history of other allergies for 30 minutes, so they can be monitored and treated immediately if they have a reaction.

What about other uncommon but potential side effects?

Recent reports have brought to light some other unexpected, but so far not serious, side effects that could be related to the vaccines, experts say.

As more and more Americans receive their first or second doses of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID vaccines every single day, [some people who menstruate are reporting changes to their periods after getting vaccinated.](#)

Dr. Kate Clancy, an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Illinois, posted her experience on Twitter in February and received hundreds of reports from those experiencing what she pondered could be a little-publicized response to the two available mRNA vaccines.

Arwady was asked about the possibility of vaccinations impacting menstruation in a Facebook live broadcast last week.

"Two hundred and twenty million Americans have gotten a first dose of vaccine, right? So, among 220 million Americans, there are people who will have, you know a herpes outbreak, who will have a changed menstruation cycle, etc.," she said. "What has been interesting, I think, is that, that this has really raised some awareness for wanting to make sure that we're asking questions about things like changes in menstruation, right? Most vaccine trials, most trials in general actually, unless they're really focused on women's reproductive health, may not even ask questions like that and that perhaps points to some biases in terms of how, you know, trials in general for medications, etc. are set up."

"I have not seen anything, to be very clear, that suggests that there is any concerning side effects in the way that would last, I know and there's a local researcher who is looking at some of this related menstruation, but very clear there's not been any link to, you know, problems with fertility, you know, anything that's long-lasting but, you know, the goal of getting a vaccine is for your immune system to learn how to protect yourself against COVID and your immune system can interact, can interface with your, you know, your hormonal levels, etc. and so there is at least some biological plausibility that you could have, you know, some change in terms of a heavier period or a lighter period for example right after getting the vaccination," Arwady continued.

Health experts have noted that menstrual changes have been documented in recent months outside of vaccinations as well.

Dr. Whitney Lyn, a family medicine attendee for Cook County Health, acknowledged the possibility of changes post-vaccination, but also noted that stress can play a role in a woman's cycle.

"Women's menstrual cycle can, you know, always change month to month for various reasons," Lyn said. "And so one of the things that causes a woman's menstrual just to change is stress and so right now we're seeing a very stressful time. And so every time someone gets the vaccine, they're a little stressed out. So sometimes can that make your flow a little heavier or a little lighter? Yes. And so, I think it's a normal response, but I don't think it's a reason not to take the vaccine."

Even without contracting COVID or getting vaccinated, menstrual changes have been reported possibly stemming from the overall pandemic environment itself. A [Washington Post report from August](#) found that several gynecologists "confirmed that many of their patients are reporting skipped periods or have noticed increases or decreases in cycle length, blood volume and level of menstrual-related pain."

There have also been [reports of what's known as "COVID arm,"](#) a term used to describe delayed skin reactions such as rashes, which appear days after injection.

"If it is going to arise, it usually appears about a week after your vaccine," [Dr. Brita Roy](#), an internal medicine physician and director of population health for Yale Medicine said. "It's a red, swollen area at the site of the shot."

The skin reactions gained attention when a letter was published in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) earlier this month detailing some patients who experienced varying degrees of arm rashes following their first dose of the Moderna vaccine.

"It's not super common, but it's not uncommon. It's a delayed hypersensitivity, similar to what you may see if you get poison ivy," Roy said. "You maybe came into contact with the poison ivy in your yard, but some people won't get a rash until a few days later."

The CDC acknowledged reports "that some people have experienced a red, itchy, swollen, or painful rash where they got the shot," which it identified as "COVID arm."

According to the [CDC](#), the rashes can start within a few days to more than a week after the first shot and "are sometimes quite large."

"If you experience 'COVID arm' after getting the first shot, you should still get the second shot at the recommended interval if the vaccine you got needs a second shot," the CDC noted. "Tell your vaccination provider that you experienced a rash or 'COVID arm' after the first shot. Your vaccination provider may recommend that you get the second shot in the opposite arm."

The CDC said those who experience COVID arm can take an antihistamine.

"If it is painful, you can take a pain medication like acetaminophen or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)," the CDC recommends.

Does one vaccine cause more side effects than the other?

According to Pfizer, about 3.8% of their clinical trial participants experienced fatigue as a side effect and 2% got a headache.

Moderna says 9.7% of their participants felt fatigued and 4.5% got a headache.

But experts say data shows the two are similar and that side effects depend more on the person than shot itself.

"I would not try to make a decision between one, you know, between Moderna and Pfizer in particular, based on side effects," Arwady said Tuesday. "I think get the one that's available to you and do definitely get that second dose."

Are side effects more likely after the first or second dose?

With the two-shot vaccines, people are more likely to report side effects after their second dose, experts have said.

According to the CDC, side effects after your second shot "may be more intense than the ones you experienced after your first shot."

"These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection and should go away within a few days," the CDC states.

In trials of both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, more people experienced side effects after the second dose.

Arwady noted that a good indicator of whether you'll experience side effects after your second dose is how your body reacted to the first.

"The biggest predictor between first and second doses is what your own reaction was," she said. "So if you didn't have much of a reaction after the first dose, you're unlikely to have a big reaction after the second dose. We do see people having a little more side effects after the second dose than the first but usually not a huge, huge amount of difference."

She added that Johnson & Johnson's vaccine "does have a lower rate of the side effects in those first few days than the other two do."

But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't get your second shot if you get side effects after your first, experts say.

"When people receive that second dose, they are receiving the second booster to try and reach the maximum efficacy," said Dr. Edward Cachay, infectious disease specialist at UCSD.

The CDC also noted that both shots are needed.

"The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine both need 2 shots in order to get the most protection," the CDC states. "You should get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get it."

Are certain people more likely to experience side effects?

There are also some factors that could make you more likely to experience side effects.

Chicago's top doctor said Tuesday that the biggest predictor for side effects so far has been age.

"Older people, broadly, do not have as much side effects and that's because their immune systems are not quite as robust, generally, and so they don't mount as much of a immune response," Arwady said. "It doesn't mean that they're not protected."

According to Loafman, the body's immune system is what creates the symptoms.

"That's simply a reflection of the immune response, just the way we have when we get ill," he said.

Arwady also noted that women are more likely to report side effects than men.

"Some of this is because women may just be better reporters... but there probably is something real to this too because something else interesting for those who may not know as much about immunity is that autoimmune diseases? Much, more likely in women, too," Arwady said. "And even the, like, more serious like the allergic reactions, the more serious allergic reactions? More likely in women."

Why is that?

Arwady said estrogen can elevate immune responses, while testosterone can decrease it. At the same time, she noted that "a lot of your immune modulating genes" can live on an "x" chromosome, which women have two of while men have one.

"So there's all these reasons that sort of immunity in general goes up a little bit different in women than it does in men," she said. "And so we're seeing women, a little more likely to report some of the side effects."

Data from the [CDC](#) also reported women were more likely to experience side effects than men, according monitoring from the first month of vaccinations.

From Dec. 14 through Jan. 13, more than 79 percent of side effects were reported by women, the data showed. Meanwhile, women received roughly 61.2 percent of the doses administered during that same time.

Side effects could also vary depending on whether or not you've had coronavirus.

"We have seen more likely that people will report some side effects because that is acting a little bit like a booster dose to your immune system," Arwady said. "Your immune system has already learned some of those lessons of how to protect itself, not in as long a way not as protective a way."

"That is also probably that booster effect," Arwady said.

Loafman agrees.

"If you had COVID a while ago or you've already got some immunity, it's more like a booster," he said. "And boosters for some people are completely asymptomatic, boosters for other people trigger their immune response against it so they have some inflammation with it."

But not getting side effects isn't a negative, health experts say.

"If you don't get side effects it does not mean that you are not protected," Arwady said. "I want to be really clear about that."

According to Loafman, it simply means "your body didn't react with as much of an inflammatory response.

"You're still making antibodies," he said.

According to Loafman, every person's response is unique.

"It's really just kind of a reflection of how unique each of our systems are, what other immunities we have," he said. "You know, a lot of the antibodies cross react and we have cross reactivity so it's really a mosaic. Each of our immune systems is a mosaic composite of all that we've been through and all that we have and all we've recently been dealing with. Our individual response varies. Everybody gets the appropriate immune response."

How effective are the Pfizer and Moderna COVID vaccines?

Questions about vaccine effectiveness have been paired with a rise in spread of multiple COVID variants.

So far, studies suggest that the vaccines currently in use can recognize the emerging variants — but they [may not provide as much protection](#) against the new strains.

Pfizer's latest study results, however, suggested that the vaccine is effective against the coronavirus variant that first emerged in South Africa.

"These data also provide the first clinical results that a vaccine can effectively protect against currently circulating variants, a critical factor to reach herd immunity and end this pandemic for the global population," Ugur Sahin, CEO and co-founder of BioNTech, said in a statement.

Moderna, citing data from its phase three clinic trial, reported its COVID-19 vaccine was more than 90% effective at protecting against COVID and more than 95% effective against severe disease up to six months after the second dose, the company said.

But boosters and new versions of vaccines that target the variants are already being explored.

Pfizer-BioNTech is testing a third booster shot of its vaccine on fully vaccinated people. Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla [said people will "likely" need a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine](#) within 12 months of getting fully vaccinated.

"The flexibility of our proprietary mRNA vaccine platform allows us to technically develop booster vaccines within weeks, if needed," Ugur Sahin, CEO and co-founder of BioNTech, said in a [release](#).

Late last month, the National Institutes of Health started testing a new COVID vaccine from Moderna aimed at protecting against a variant first discovered in South Africa. Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel told CNBC that the company hopes to have a booster shot for its two-dose vaccine available in the fall.

But what about without the variants?

In clinical trials, Moderna's vaccine reported 94.1% effectiveness at preventing COVID-19 in people who received both doses. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was said to be 95% effective.

A new CDC study reported that a single dose of Pfizer's or Moderna's COVID vaccine was 80% effective in preventing infections. That number jumped to 90% two weeks after the second dose, the study on vaccinated health care workers showed.

"These findings indicate that authorized mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are effective for preventing SARS-CoV-2 infection, regardless of symptom status, among working-age adults in real-world conditions," the U.S. agency wrote in the study. "COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all eligible persons."

It is not known if any of the vaccines prevent the spread of the virus by people who are asymptomatic.

Monica Hendrickson, public health administrator for the Peoria County Health Department noted that the vaccines each hold a high effectiveness against death and severe illness for coronavirus.

"So, really, you're looking at a distinction that from a clinical standpoint, or from, you know, an epidemiological standpoint is very minor compared to what we really are hoping for, which is decreases in death and decreases in severe illness, where they all match up between the three vaccines," Hendrickson said. "Most important thing though is that when these vaccines come on the market, if you have an option to any of these, get one of them."

Hendrickson's message echoes one made by Dr. Marina Del Rios, emergency medicine specialist at the University of Illinois-Chicago, [during NBC 5's "Vaccinated State" panel](#).

"Part of my messaging in the community has been that the vaccines on the market are equally efficacious and equally safe," Del Rios said. "The best vaccine you can get is the one that you can get ahold of first, and getting vaccinated earlier, sooner rather than later, protects us from getting sick ourselves and also our community, which has been so terribly devastated by this virus."

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Vaccination rate sinks to lowest point in almost 2 months as COVID-19 kills 32 more Illinoisans

About 60% of Illinois adults have gotten at least one shot, but demand for the vaccine has dipped by 34% over the past three weeks.

Mitchell Armentrout

May 1, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/5/1/22414050/illinois-coronavirus-vaccine-cases-deaths-pritzker-positivity-reopen-covid-19-may-1>

Public health officials have applauded Illinois residents for “bending the curve” of the state’s latest uptick in COVID-19 cases, but now another important pandemic curve is flattening out — and that’s not what experts want to see.

The Illinois Department of Public Health on Saturday reported the state’s seven-day average of coronavirus vaccine doses administered per day is down to 87,494, its lowest point since March 4.

The daily vaccination rate hit an all-time high of almost 133,000 on April 12, and that figure has been in free fall ever since — a 34% decrease in just 19 days.

A total of 88,753 shots went into arms Friday, a 29% decrease compared to the previous Friday and barely half the total reported April 16.

Officials have said they expected demand to decline after the initial rush on the life-saving vaccines, and it comes just as there are finally more than enough doses to go around.

“Now we have to change hearts and minds to encourage individuals who have not yet made the decision to get vaccinated,” Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said [earlier this week](#). “The COVID vaccine offers an easy, safe way to protect yourself and your loved ones from serious illness and death.”

About 60% of Illinois adults have gotten at least one shot, and 32% of residents are fully vaccinated so far.

Meanwhile, infection numbers remain relatively low across the state, but the virus is still claiming dozens of lives every day.

Officials reported 32 more COVID-19 fatalities, including that of a woman in her 30s from Madison County in the downstate Metro East region. Illinois’ viral death toll since last March stands at 21,992.

The state also logged 2,813 new cases that were diagnosed among 83,070 tests, raising the average statewide positivity rate slightly to 3.5%. Illinois has been hovering around that number for about a week. It’s down from 4.4% in mid-April.

More than 1.3 million of the state’s 12.7 million residents have contracted the virus over the past year.

For help finding a vaccination appointment in Chicago, visit zocdoc.com or call (312) 746-4835.

For suburban Cook County sites, visit vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or call (833) 308-1988.

To find providers elsewhere, visit coronavirus.illinois.gov or call (833) 621-1284.



This May Day, Cook County Department Of Public Health Expresses Concern For Workers Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

May 1, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/05/01/cook-county-health-may-day-workers-pandemic/>

The Cook County Department of Public Health on Saturday issued a statement for International Workers Day – or May Day – expressing concern for workers who are struggling in the pandemic.

The statement said in part that the department “recognizes the ongoing need to build anti-racist systems to protect the health and safety of all workers, but especially those workers who are low-wage, without benefits, and unprotected.”

“In what’s been the most difficult year in our lifetimes, we owe so much to workers who have had to risk catching this deadly virus simply by going to work,” Dr. Rachel Rubin, Co-Lead and Senior Medical Officer of CCDPH said in the news release. “Whether workers are deemed ‘essential’ or not, every person who has left home to work deserves our genuine thanks, and they deserve continued protection against this virus from their employers.”

The department noted that it works with Raise the Floor and several worker centers to build a better future workers’ rights, health, and safety are prioritized with a focus on equity for all workers. The groups have developed a Worker Protection Program, which equips both workers and employees with information, resources, and support to minimize the spread of disease and ensure workplace safety – both during the coronavirus pandemic and beyond.

“Before the pandemic, workers already faced many issues of unfair labor practices, including retaliation, wage theft, health and safety violations, discrimination, and unjust firings. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted and exacerbated these unjust conditions, as people were made to choose between their livelihood and their life,” Sophia Zaman Executive Director of Raise the Floor Alliance, said in a release. “The best way to honor working families is to implement policies that protect their rights and ensure they feel empowered in the workplace.”

The department urged employers to maintain vigilance in protecting their workers by following public health guidance and mitigations and by urging and allowing worker vaccination. One option, the department said, is a mobile vaccination event for workers, their families, and community members.

Work wishing to host a mobile pop-up vaccine clinic can apply to do so at vaccine.cookcountyl.gov, by clicking on the [Organization Sign-Up tab](#), the county said. For information on safe and healthy workplaces, the county says to visit: <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/workplace/>. For the latest COVID-19 vaccination information for suburban Cook County, visit: cookcountypublichealth.org.



Chicago Area Restaurants Boom With Warm Weather And Relaxed COVID-19 Restrictions; Owners Hope It's A Taste Of What's To Come

Marie Saavedra

May 2, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/05/02/chicago-area-restaurants-warm-weather-relaxed-covid-mitigations/>

There was a business boom this Sunday thanks to summerlike weather and improved COVID-19 metrics – with Chicagoans out in big numbers for a boost that many restaurants desperately need.

As CBS 2's Marie Saavedra reported, restaurant owners hope this amounts to a taste of what's to come.

The weather on Sunday, with temperatures climbing into the 80s, made for larger crowds outside. Meanwhile, relaxed restrictions also made it possible for more people to be inside.

Both things have restaurant owners feeling like they're taking one more step forward, even though there's a long way to go.

Saavedra visited [Hey Nonny Live Music + Local Kitchen](#), at 10 S. Vail Ave. in Arlington Heights. In one of the surest signs of pandemic improvement, live music at Hey Nonny was back on Sunday.

"It has been nonstop creative adjustments," said Chip Brooks, who owns Hey Nonny along with Chris Dungan.

"It's so fantastic to have people indoors," Dungan said.

Hey Nonny was having one of its best weekends in a long time this weekend. Their crowd for jazz brunch was both outside and in, thanks to relaxed COVID-19 mitigations in suburban Cook County.

As of Friday, indoor dining is allowed at 50 percent capacity or 100 people, whichever is smaller. And that is pretty [perfect timing](#), with a few days of gorgeous weather and more people vaccinated – ready to get out.

"I think everybody has said that they've seen just a great turnout this spring," Dungan said, "and people have really seen an uptick in business."

The City of Chicago is also at [50 percent indoor capacity](#) – and that has helped, said Pat Doerr with the Hospitality Business Association of Chicago.

"From mitigations and regulatory-wise, when we were just coming out of the indoor ban, we're way better off," Doerr said.

But when it comes to the city, he says a real rebound is not possible without regaining tourism.

"I'm actually doing this from a large downtown restaurant with exactly patrons inside and a half-empty sidewalk café, and we're surrounded by hotels and two blocks from our Riverwalk," Doerr said via Zoom. "so there is clearly a lot of work to be done to rebuild the demands for the entire hospitality industry – especially downtown."

Back out in the suburbs, they agree getting back to where they were pre-pandemic will take more than a few nice weekends – but things are better than they’ve been.

“It’s just one of those things that we think that our business is just going to pick up every single month moving forward,” Dungan said.

And after the last year, that is a win.

“To be open and to be able to do all this means that we can do what we do and bring live music to everybody,” Brooks added.

Cook County’s Department of Public Health says it not just the decline of covid cases, hospitalizations and deaths that led to them relaxing these restrictions. It is also because more than 50 percent of residents 16 and up have now had at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine.



COVID-19 vaccine Chicago: Family explains overcoming shot hesitancy, encourages others to get vaccinated

Chicago, Cook County COVID vaccine sites now offering walk-in appointments

Michelle Gallardo

May 2, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/chicago-family-explains-overcoming-covid-vaccine-hesitancy/10571474/>

Three generations of Combs overcame COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy Sunday to get their 2nd round of Pfizer shots. They want others to do the same.

At 97-years-old, Secnoba Comb is the matriarch of the family.

"It just stang a little bit," Comb said.

On Sunday, three generations of Combs got their second Pfizer shots together at Illinois Masonic. And while all were happy to do so, daughter Cheryl said it took her a while to come around.

"It just frightened me. I got COVID in November," Cheryl Comb said. "I said, 'wait a minute, wow. If I can get it, then who else?' Then my nephew had it. He almost died."

"He told me, 'Granny, you need to get it because you seen what it did to me,'" Secnoba said.

So Cheryl put her vaccine hesitancy aside, and made appointments for herself, her mother, her youngest sister, Carolyn, and her sister's 19-year-old son, Erskine. The teen is an aerospace engineer major at University of Illinois, and his entire freshman year has been disrupted by the virus.

"I've been used most of my life to having a routine going to school. So being online all day and not having a routine, a schedule, definitely affected myself," Erskine Comb-Mullins said.

"I'm the biggest scaredy cat there is of getting a shot. I am the biggest baby. If I can go and get vaccinated, you definitely can go," Carolyn said. "This is my son right here. He is my only child. I need to be healthy and around for him and for the future, to see what he's going to become, and for my mother, to be here for her, my sisters, all my family."

All Chicago and Cook County sites, including the United Center, are now offering walk-in COVID vaccines. No appointments are needed.



Illinois COVID vaccine: Cook County pushes to get more restaurant workers vaccinated

Diane Pathieu

May 3, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/cook-co-pushes-to-get-more-restaurant-workers-vaccinated/10572490/>

Cook County is recognizing Monday as Restaurant Worker Day as it pushes to get more restaurant workers vaccinated.

Cook County Health operates six mass vaccination sites across the county that offer vaccines for walk-ins as well as those with appointments.

Restaurant workers, considered essential workers, are encouraged to visit one of those sites to get their vaccine.

For Donna Miller, who's been working at Al and Andy's restaurant in Schiller Park for about 15 years, getting vaccinated was a no-brainer.

"I see a lot of people every day," Miller said. "I work six days a week, so I'm around a lot of people"

The Cook County Health Department is working with the Illinois Restaurant Association and the Chicago Medical Society to promote Restaurant Worker Vaccination Day to restaurant staff and food service workers across the county...

Essential worker Minnie Tempera also made the decision to get vaccinated.

"I work at Sam's Club, so I'm with a lot of people," Tempera said. "I feel much better knowing that i have some protection besides the mask."

According to the numbers, about half of eligible people in Cook County have gotten their shots. The health department is trying to urge the rest of the population to get vaccinated.

Getting restaurant workers vaccinated is especially urgent as restrictions loosen, and indoor capacity in restaurants expands.

For more information on the vaccine sites, visit cookcountyhealth.org/covid19-vaccine-sites/. Walk-ins are welcome at the site, but appointments can still be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m.-10 p.m.



Cook County urges restaurant workers to get vaccinated

Roseanne Tellez

May 3, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-urges-restaurant-workers-to-get-vaccinated>

A new initiative is encouraging [Cook County](#) restaurant workers to get vaccinated.

Cooks, servers, managers and others are being invited to any one of the six [mass vaccination sites](#) in the county.

Mondays are now "Restaurant Days" at all Cook County mass vaccination sites and it's not just county health officials, the Illinois Restaurant Association is behind this effort.

With COVID restrictions loosening at restaurants, they say now is a good time for food service employees to get their vaccines.

FOX 32 talked to restaurant managers and owners who came to the vaccination site in Forest Park Monday, some waiting to greet their employees to get their vaccinations.

"They believe that vaccinating restaurant workers is keeping them safe to make sure that our restaurants stay open and also to safeguard for a guests as well. it's a really important factor. They go hand-in-hand. safe staff members serving our guests," said Donnie Madia from One Off Hospitality.

Maria Philippou, manager at Charlie's Restaurant, said it's a positive sign of the industry bouncing back.

"I am all for it. a lot of our employees have already been fully vaccinated so it's a great way Everyone's getting everybody vaccinated so we open up sooner. Business is already picking up."

No appointment is necessary to show up at any mass vaccination site in Cook County.

All of the sites are open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Daily Herald

Reaching herd immunity against COVID in Illinois likely a 'longer process' than hoped

Marni Pyke

May 4, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210503/reaching-herd-immunity-against-covid-in-illinois-likely-a-longer-process-than-hoped>

When COVID-19 vaccines began flying into the arms of health care workers in December, there was a mass exhale as hopes of quenching the deadly pandemic seemed achievable for the first time.

Come February, frustration built as thousands sought to be vaccinated amid a trickle of doses. Now that it's May, vaccinations are plentiful but demand in Illinois is down -- raising concerns that the state will never reach herd immunity, which would signal a return to normalcy.

On Monday, the Illinois Department of Public Health announced the state's seven-day average for vaccinations was 78,440 shots compared to 110,057 a month ago on April 3.

The goal of herd immunity is to effectively stamp out a disease and that happens when enough people in a community are protected because they've been vaccinated or were infected and recovered.

"We are still learning about the (COVID-19) disease so we don't know what proportion of the populations needs to be immune to stop its spread," IDPH spokeswoman Melaney Arnold said Monday. "Highly contagious diseases, like measles, needs a higher proportion of the population (estimated at 94%) to be immune and interrupt the transmission of measles.

"From the beginning of the pandemic to now, estimates on herd immunity have changed ranging anywhere from 60% to 90% for COVID-19. Currently, the vaccine has been found to be effective against variants of concern, but it's difficult to predict what will happen. What we need right now is for as many people as possible to get vaccinated to stop transmission of the virus. Without greater immunity, the virus will continue to circulate and our ability to return to normal ... will take longer," Arnold said.

In suburban Cook County, close to 1 million people, or about 45% of residents, have been vaccinated, public health department officials said.

"At this point, we believe it's too early to determine if herd immunity will be reached but continue to be optimistic as more people are being vaccinated every day," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, CCDPH senior public health medical officer.

Rubin agreed there are many unknowns about COVID-19 but said "scientists estimate up to 80 percent of the population will need to be immune to control the illness and reach herd immunity."

For those worried about never achieving herd immunity, the antidote is to convince someone to be vaccinated, experts say.

"The way to think about it is -- every single person who get vaccinated is one more place the virus can't go to," advised Dr. Michael Bauer, medical director at Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital.

"What we need to keep doing is vaccinating as many people as possible in the fastest way we can because we still have a very good window of opportunity before a potential late fall or early winter resurgence."

"If you add the number of people that are vaccinated and protected, and the large number of people that have been infected and presumably have a fair amount of natural immunity, it creates less and less avenues for the virus. With that certainly will come a decreased risk of mutations and resistant-type strains happening."

About 32% of Illinois' population is fully vaccinated.

As a point of reference, Bauer noted that Israel experienced a dive in COVID-19 infections after the country reached the 40% to 50% range of fully vaccinated residents. "They saw a precipitous drop in the numbers and once they hit 60% they really lowered," he said.

Regarding herd immunity, Edward Hospital's Dr. Jonathan Pinsky thinks the reality is, "it's probably going to be a lot longer process than what we would hope for. It's not like -- now vaccines are available and everyone is going to go out and get one immediately and we'll reach herd immunity."

That's because many people have cold feet about the vaccines, despite the fact 247 million shots have been administered in the U.S.

A significant number of the COVID-19 patients Pinsky is treating now at Edward Hospital are vaccine-hesitant, he said.

"What we're seeing are largely people in their 40s and 50s and early 60s who had not yet gotten vaccinated," said Pinsky, Edward's medical director of infection control and prevention. "Some of them were eligible to be vaccinated but decided to wait and many are regretting that decision."

Vaccine Rates Among the Incarcerated Remain Low Amid Mistrust and Misinformation

Many people behind bars are turning down or deferring vaccination, despite months of advocacy to get vaccines into jails and prisons.

Tiana Headley

May 4, 2021

<https://therivernewsroom.com/inmate-vaccine-rates-mistrust-misinformation/>

“nightmare” is an understatement for Kevin Hayes’s first months with the pandemic. The father of three was serving his 28-year sentence in the Fishkill Correctional Facility when the coronavirus crept in. Six of the facility’s incarcerated [have died](#) from the disease, and the 57 year old says he roomed with the virus’s first victim in the prison.

“I had been in the same room with Mr. Stan Li for a year and he fell sick right before my very eyes,” he shared over email.

As Hayes lay in their tiny cell, watching as the 66-year-old Li labored to breathe and eventually stopped eating, he couldn’t help but inform a corrections officer. Li died on a respirator in April of 2020. It would be another eight months before the first COVID-19 vaccine was authorized for emergency use in the United States—and longer still before the shots would make it into prisons and jails.

Indeed, incarcerated individuals have been an [afterthought](#) in states’ vaccine rollouts, despite cramped and unsanitary conditions and high comorbidity rates in carceral settings. It took a [February lawsuit](#) by an activist coalition for New York State officials to provide vaccines to incarcerated people 65 and older. A month later, a state Supreme Court Justice [mandated universal access](#) for jails and prisons, finding “no acceptable excuse” for the delay up to that point.

Advocates framed this previous lack of access as an injustice. But many people behind bars just aren’t up for the job, often citing the most common fears and misconceptions about the vaccines and the virus. Many don’t receive adequate information needed to make informed decisions for themselves.

Hayes, who had an asymptomatic case shortly after Li’s death, signed up for either the Pfizer or Moderna doses. But state corrections officials later announced their switch to the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine, effective April 6. Then the CDC’s pause on the vaccine also halted prison and jail systems’ use of J&J. Hayes says the vaccine’s rare instances of [blood clotting](#), along with the [perceived lower efficacy of the shot](#), leave him and others in the facility with little confidence. Some are even waiting to get vaccinated after their release. “We feel as though we’re being used as their guinea pigs,” he says.

Many of the younger men in his unit, according to Hayes, don’t think they’re at risk of serious illness from the virus and brush off the need for vaccination. By contrast, he says most of the older men have already been vaccinated or are eagerly waiting their turn.

About 74 percent of those 65 and older in the state’s prisons have received both Moderna doses, according to state corrections spokesperson Thomas Mailey. But only 59.5 percent of those with at least one comorbidity opted for both doses. Hundreds refused the second dose, were released, or were unavailable due to outside medical trips.

Several Factors Hindering the Vaccination Effort

Overall, delays in the vaccine rollout—combined with mistrust, misinformation, and information gaps in prisons—have translated to only 17 percent of the total incarcerated population being fully vaccinated as of May 2. That’s compared to a little more than 35 percent of the statewide population, [according to the state’s COVID-19 vaccine tracker](#).

The Correctional Association of New York, a nonprofit prison monitoring group, was told by Greene Correctional Facility staff that only 40 percent of the roughly 900-person prison expressed interest in vaccination. “It seemed that more than half of people we spoke to were hesitant, and it sounded like the Johnson & Johnson pause contributed to that, among other concerns,” says Jennifer Scaife, executive director of the organization.

Vaccination rates are even harder to track in county jails because their populations fluctuate daily as people are moved to state prisons, serve shorter sentences, or are released pretrial. The River contacted seven of the Hudson Valley’s county jails, with average monthly populations ranging from 400 to 33, and found that less than 35 percent of their incarcerated populations are partially or fully vaccinated at a time. Putnam County Jail, which had an average March population of 40, has only vaccinated one person since February.

Current case numbers provide more hopeful, if presumably short-term, optimism. Most jails contacted by The River have reported zero cases in recent weeks. Scaife says infection rates in prisons have also dropped since [mass outbreaks in January](#). And while sanitation and mask wearing have improved in some facilities, the trend is anything but uniform. “The [correctional] system is managing the pandemic with much more consistency and public health awareness than at the beginning,” Scaife says.

But those measures aren’t enough on their own. There are still far too many people behind bars in New York to make social distancing possible in carceral settings. Bail reforms [shrunk](#) the state’s jail population by 31 percent last year, and efforts to reduce populations in county jails amid the pandemic [yielded another 17 percent](#) drop between March and April in 2020, with reductions continuing through July. Officials also [released thousands](#) of people with technical parole violations and low-level crime convictions last year from state prisons. But jail numbers have ticked back up since the summer, after reform opponents won [rollbacks on the bail law](#).

Prisons have gone the opposite direction under the state corrections department’s early release program: Almost 4,000 convicted of nonviolent crimes, non-sex offenses, and low-level parole violations have been released as of May 2, according to a department spokesperson. That’s compared to roughly 3,000 releases by October of last year. Early releases and a [decline trend predating the pandemic](#) have shrunk the state’s prison population to 31,511 people.

Gregg Gonsalves, an epidemiologist at the Yale School of Public Health, says that decarceration and vaccinations are the key to curbing the virus in jails and prisons. Otherwise, continued spread and outbreaks aren’t just bad news for incarcerated populations: “We know that the rates of COVID inside of prisons often spread to the surrounding community because people go in and out.”

The phenomenon is more pronounced with county jails and their fluctuating populations. A [2020 study](#) found that people cycling through Chicago’s Cook County Jail caused 15.7 percent and 15.9 percent of all documented COVID-19 cases in Illinois and Chicago, respectively, on April 19, 2020. Those numbers don’t account for jail administrators and staff who return to their communities after a day’s work. “The reason we’re getting everybody vaccinated is so we can protect not just ourselves but the people around us,” Gonsalves says. (Cook County officials, including officials from the jail and the Chicago Department of Public Health, have criticized the report, saying it relies on old data that does not account for changes the jail had made to its COVID safety protocols.)[*](#)

Yet some correctional administrators, including in jails, are taking a relatively lax approach to vaccine refusal and hesitancy. “Maybe it’s because they’re afraid of needles, or they don’t trust the vaccine, or we’re giving a particular vaccine as opposed to another one,” says William Hilscher, assistant administrator at Columbia County Jail. “It’s anyone’s prerogative to change their mind if they want, so we continuously survey our population.”

Others are having more personalized dialogues with incarcerated people. “I personally spoke to our population of the importance of getting vaccinated and our medical staff has educated the population on the different vaccinations

available,” Ulster County Sheriff Juan Figueroa says. “I am fully vaccinated and described my experience to the inmate population.”

Gonsalves says that a more hands-off approach will ultimately cost lives: “Not stepping forward as a warden or corrections official to make sure that you’re doing your very best to convince people to get vaccinated in your facility is a dereliction of duty and care.”

An Informational Issue

Education on the virus and vaccines is often uneven, unreliable, and sparse in correctional facilities. Inmates watch cable news when they can. And family and friends share info—which may or may not be reliable—during phone calls or via email.

Each prison’s Inmate Liaison Committee (ILC), a group of incarcerated individuals elected by their peers to relay the general population’s concerns to administrators, are also supposed to provide info. Some, including Hayes, say they aren’t that informative or helpful, though reports have found [communication disparities](#) between corrections staff and the committees.

Corrections officials say staff provide pamphlets or post flyers from the CDC on bulletin boards, and regularly canvass prison populations to gauge interest in getting vaccinated. Scaife has also heard reports of staff playing videos from the state health department—and of Tyler Perry encouraging people to take the vaccines. “There’s no context that all the public health experts say that this is why we should take the vaccine, but if you don’t believe us, here’s a celebrity,” she says. “You really have to advocate for yourself and inform yourself.”

Scaife says that because prison populations are diverse, approaches to building trust and combatting vaccine hesitancy should also vary. New York’s jails and prisons are majority Black and Latinx, populations historically underserved and discriminated against in health care.

In one rare approach to information dissemination, Superintendent Michael Capra at Sing Sing Correctional Facility reportedly held “[town halls](#)” in the facility’s chapel, where ILC members and leaders from religious and cultural groups were present. [Some say](#) that being informed is often more about empowering incarcerated people to make informed decisions than it is convincing them to get vaccinated.

Ultimately, increasing vaccination rates in jails and prisons will be an ongoing struggle for a population routinely cast aside, and intentionally harmed, by society. “Nobody’s shown any regard for the health of people incarcerated for the past 16 months,” Gonsalves says. “It’s a stretch to say, ‘Well, now we care about you.’”

Chicago Tribune

Illinois' COVID-19 vaccination pace is slowing, particularly downstate. Here's what researchers say must be done to boost the effort and return to normalcy.

Joe Mahr and Alice Yin

May 5, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-vaccine-hesitancy-illinois-20210505-hqp25szltnfqxdsuiwg5azry6q-story.html>

At first glance, there may not be a lot in common between the tiny downstate town of Arthur and Chicago's Englewood neighborhood.

Arthur is surrounded by flat farmland in the heart of Illinois' Amish country, a largely white, solidly Republican area. Englewood helps anchor Chicago's dense South Side, largely Black and reliably Democratic. But the unprecedented pandemic has spurred one similarity: low COVID-19 vaccination rates.

Such communities represent the new battlefield for Illinois to reach herd immunity — or, more likely, [something closer to it](#) — in the march toward normalcy.

Those who study and work in vaccinations say an already exhausted public health ecosystem must build and flex a different set of bureaucratic muscles. The goal? To lure the ambivalent or leery into their favorite doctors' offices or clinics where they can easily get a shot, or at least talk through concerns.

A Tribune analysis of federal and state data shows that there is plenty of work to do, with millions of adults remaining unvaccinated, and some regions now vaccinating so slowly that — if the pace doesn't change — it could take them a year or more to get close to herd immunity.

Those wide swaths of unvaccinated are covered by different levels of public health systems that, while broadly acknowledging the problem, offer varying details of how they'll try to boost rates to the point that communities can shed restrictions and make what's left of 2021 look more like 2019.

Making that harder, according to health officials and researchers, are largely two buckets of people.

One is a group adamant against getting a shot, a group that Arthur's mayor, Rod Randall, said is likely a key reason a Tribune analysis found his town's ZIP code had one of the lowest vaccination rates, at roughly just a tenth of residents having gotten a shot by mid-April.

"No amount of encouraging, or debate, or incentivizing will make a significant difference to many of the deliberately unvaccinated," he told the Tribune in an email.

But there are others who may be on the fence, either not sure it's worth the hassle or nervous about safety. Researchers and advocates say primary care doctors say may be able sway many in this group, if only public health agencies can get them more vaccine with less red tape.

"The easiest part of this whole process is giving the vaccine," said Dr. Vishnu Chundi, chairman of the Chicago Medical Society's COVID-19 task force. "The hardest part of this is all the paperwork and bureaucracy that goes with it."

Federal, state and local officials say they've begun to change their approach, including plans to get more doses to primary doctors, reach out to homebound residents and partner more with community-based groups. And they've begun touting incentives such as free hair cuts and concerts, in Chicago, and sport-shooting targets at a downstate Department of Natural Resources complex.

"There's a lot of free stuff I'll be announcing for people who get vaccinated," Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Tuesday.

The changing approach follows a clear slowdown in shots administered in Illinois and across the country, threatening state and federal officials' goal to wipe out the virus.

Where are we at?

After a [slower start](#), Illinois has caught up and been among the faster states to vaccinate its population. By Tuesday, federal data showed Illinois ranked fourth out of the 10 largest states in the percent of population receiving at least one dose, at 47.4%. (Because of a lag in data collection, Illinois Department of Public Health figures may be slightly higher.)

Still, Illinois is seeing the same slowdown that's occurring nationally.

In the first four weeks of April, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data shows Illinois' rate of getting unvaccinated residents at least one shot dropped from 4.4% of all residents during the month's first seven-day period to 2.9% by its fourth. That's not as bad a dip as seen in most other big states, but still sizable.

Within Illinois, the drop has been far more profound downstate, with [clear signs of vaccine hesitancy](#) emerging more than a month ago in some parts, even as limits were removed to allow anyone 16 and older to get a shot.

The Pritzker administration has split the state into 11 health regions, and state data shows the pace of vaccinations peaked in early March in west-central and east-central Illinois, then by mid-March in three more downstate regions. Those regions closest to Chicago were the last to peak, around mid-April.

IDPH has estimated that between 75% to 85% of residents would need to be vaccinated for the state to reach so-called herd immunity, when COVID-19 would die out because it couldn't easily find people to infect. It's a rough estimate — scientists still say they don't know the precise number — and [they're increasingly doubtful](#) the nation will get there anytime soon.

Adding even more confusion, in Illinois, is that IDPH doesn't publish data online that breaks down, in each region, how many people have gotten at least one dose.

The Tribune calculated estimates from a mix of data obtained from IDPH and the CDC. The Tribune estimate shows that the closest region to reaching that 75% threshold is the one encompassing DuPage and Kane counties, where more than 48% of all residents have gotten at least one shot by Tuesday. Close behind are suburban Cook County and Chicago, at about 47% and 45%, respectively.

But the numbers drop often the farther you get from Chicago. It's about 40% of residents in the north-central region of Illinois, or 20 counties that stretch from Oswego to Bloomington, then west to the Iowa border. It drops close to 30% in the southern region, or the 20 counties spread from roughly Mount Vernon to Illinois' southern tip and east to the Indiana line.

The data still isn't precise. It doesn't count Illinoisans who got shots across state borders, nor does it take into account the [latest census figures](#) suggesting there are more Illinoisans to vaccinate than previously estimated.

Still, the available data offers a sobering assessment of how long it could take to reach herd immunity.

In the southern region, the pace of vaccinations is so slow now that, in the past week, less than a percent of the population was added to the list of those who'd gotten any shot.

At that pace, the region would not approach 75% vaccination immunity for roughly a year, if not longer.

Compare that to the region for DuPage and Kane counties, where the weekly pace is so fast that, if it continues, the region could reach 75% vaccination by early July.

Paces could pick up, particularly with 12- to 15-year-olds likely to be [approved for shots](#). But researchers remain concerned about some regions lagging others.

For strongly vaccinated regions, researchers have said, the novel coronavirus will become far less of a community threat, while less vaccinated regions face the potential of major outbreaks that could still strain their health care systems.

“It’s not really the statewide number,” the state health director, Dr. Ngozi Ezike, told lawmakers during a virtual hearing last week. “It really matters what’s happening in your very local community.”

Unclear efforts to target places

To figure out which communities are most at risk, researchers say health officials should be making more precise measurements of who’s not vaccinated yet.

“You have to start mapping out where are the neighborhoods that have the lower vaccination rates, not at the county level, but at census tract, or neighborhood, or ZIP code,” said Julie Swann, an engineering professor at North Carolina State University who researches health care logistics.

The state collects detailed data on all shots that could pinpoint where vaccinations efforts are flailing. The Chicago Department of Public Health has used the data to publish vaccination rates by ZIP code online, as well as target certain ZIP codes and neighborhoods for “hyper local” vaccination pushes, said the agency’s medical director, Dr. Candice Robinson.

“This is absolutely something we’re very focused on still, making plans for continuing kind of that work, local within those communities,” she said Tuesday.

Cook County Health has used that data as well to pinpoint ZIP codes where it believes uptake is low so it can work with the Chicago Medical Society to find doctors in those areas to help push vaccinations.

The Illinois Department of Public Health, which oversees efforts outside Chicago, did not answer questions in the past week about what specific research it has done to pinpoint low-vaccination areas across the state. It previously has said it uses data to dispatch its mobile vaccination teams. The governor last week told reporters the state also has “people going door to door,” although his administration didn’t respond to a question seeking specifics.

The Tribune has attempted to identify the poorly vaccinated areas using data it could obtain. Health agencies can strip raw vaccination data of identifying information and release it, but IDPH would not do so for the Tribune, saying it would be illegal to provide.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did that, however, for shots administered through mid-April. And an analysis of that data shows massive differences in the rate of those vaccinated in ZIP codes across Illinois.

Analyzing ZIP code data can be tricky because population estimates are imprecise. But the data suggests some ZIP codes were at or above 60% of residents getting at least one shot by mid-April, while others were far less. That includes Arthur, where the data suggests barely a tenth of residents had gotten a shot by then.

Hesitancy

The town of about 2,300 residents sits about 30 miles southwest of Champaign. It’s surrounded by farmland that’s home to about 4,000 Amish residents, according to the [town website](#).

In pre-pandemic times, the area pushed tourism, with festivals celebrating everything from bluegrass music to strawberry jam. Its website touts the town’s motto of friendliness: “You’re A Stranger Only Once.”

Mayor Randall said the pandemic, however, has revealed a divide on how residents approach vaccination.

“Some of us believe we should be vaccinated for the common good, not just to protect ourselves, much like the wearing of face masks,” he said in an email. “Others do not feel as strong of social obligation and have taken a stance of rugged individualism when it comes to COVID. There is very little that can be done to change that position.”

The town straddles two counties whose health departments would be responsible for the vaccination efforts, Douglas and Moultrie. The latter did not respond to an email, but Douglas County said it suspected a decent amount of hesitancy could be within the Amish community. (It said it had been seeking ZIP code data itself to study, and asked the Tribune to provide its data, which the newspaper did.)

Douglas County’s public health community liaison, Colleen Lehmann, said last week that she’d mailed out letters to two dozen bishops of Amish churches in the county to tout the benefits of vaccination, but had not yet gotten any responses.

Such hesitancy is not a surprise to those who study or work in public health, nor limited to certain religions, races or ethnicities.

In Englewood, resident Pamela Abrams, 59, survived COVID-19 and struggled with lingering fatigue. So did her daughter. Even still, the vaccine wasn’t an automatic choice.

Abrams said she decided two months ago to get vaccinated but sensed so much skepticism over the vaccine’s safety that she didn’t tell her family.

“I was like, ‘You know what, I’m not going to tell my kids I’m going to do it,’” she recalled, later adding: “I just prayed about it. I was like, ‘Lord, cover me. Watch over me.’”

Soon, her daughter got the shot as well. But her son, she said, remains hesitant, in a ZIP code with one of the lowest vaccination rates in the city, less than a fourth of all residents.

The Abrams family follows a pattern of vaccine hesitancy that researchers have long anticipated.

There’s the fear of something new, complicated by a social media ecosystem that can spread false information about dangers. Not helping boost confidence: the [recent pause](#) in using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine because of extremely rare, but potentially dangerous, side effects.

Perhaps more entrenched is the political divide after a year of shutdowns and mask mandates that pitted arguments for safety and vigilance against complaints the danger was overblown and governments had overreacted.

The debate largely followed party lines, with a sizable number of Republicans now saying they’re unlikely to get vaccinated, despite the shots developed during former President Donald Trump’s administration, Trump getting vaccinated and [calling the shots](#) “great” and “safe.”

The CDC has published [survey data from mid-March](#) that was used to predict the percent of residents in each county who at the time felt they probably or definitely wouldn’t get a shot. That ranges from just 12% in DuPage County to 19% of residents in four east-central Illinois counties.

Make it easy

If the CDC estimates hold true, that leaves millions more Illinoisans willing to get a shot who haven’t yet.

To reach them, researchers and advocates say, you have to make getting a shot much easier.

Gone should be the days, they say, when people had to hunt around multiple, confusing websites to try to discern where to find shots, and then work around appointment windows.

“I think the challenge now is to bring the vaccine to where people are — in their neighborhood, in their communities, even in their workplaces and especially in their primary care providers,” said Rebecca Weintraub, the faculty director of the Global Health Delivery Project at Harvard University.

The shift is already occurring. Walgreens, Walmart and Sam's Club, for example, have begun allowing [walk-in appointments](#), and Walgreens has been [dispatching a mobile clinic](#) in Chicago.

"We really want to make it as convenient as possible for people to be vaccinated," said CDPH's Robinson.

The Biden administration also on Tuesday [announced a host of efforts](#), including sending more doses to rural clinics. But the push to primary care may be difficult to pull off quickly.

It first requires a major change in how public health agencies have approached COVID-19 vaccinations. After all, back when supply was tight, public health agencies could easily herd the eager to big sites, even if those lucky enough to score a slot had to take off work or even drive several hours.

But today's unvaccinated are far less likely to be able, or willing, to shape-shift their lives to get a shot, researchers said.

Now the process favors medical "touchpoints" — any time someone happens to come into contact with the health care system. Think of basic checkups or physicals, where a doctor or nurse asks if someone's been vaccinated and can talk through concerns. For patients who decide to get shots, they can be injected on the spot.

That raises another challenge: making it easy for doctors too.

Traditional vaccinations, for things like measles and tetanus, have never been widely popular among many doctors who see adult patients, Chundi said, because of the additional regulatory requirements. It can take weeks to get signed up to use government registries, which then can take 15 to 20 minutes to fill out for each patient.

The COVID-19 vaccine has more bureaucratic hurdles too. Practices must order them through government agencies. And the vaccines are harder to mix, store and handle.

Chundi said most doctors are eager to help end the pandemic, and have been willing to sacrifice to do it, but need public health agencies to help work through the roadblocks.

"We're having to adjust our lives to what the policymakers want all the time. But at the end of the day, that's hard to do as a primary care office, where you're going to have to re-engineer your office for this. It should be the other way around," he said.

Public health officials, to varying degrees, have said they've already begun or plan to begin creating a system that gets more doses to primary care offices, beyond the recently announced federal push.

But the public health agencies are also banking on everyday residents becoming pseudo-ambassadors of the vaccine to friends and family. One example: South Shore resident Desiree Taylor.

Taylor, 29, a home care provider, used to be hesitant, after reading what she now says were misleading Facebook posts. Amid her hesitancy, she was approached by a patient's wife, who asked Taylor to rethink her fears.

So she did her own research, got the shot and now says she takes a similar tact in how she approaches hesitant friends and family.

"I try to let people know, 'Yes, I was against it. I was the one that was saying no, I'm not going to do this,'" Taylor said. "Now I try to tell people it's OK."



Illinois' COVID-19 vaccination pace is slowing, particularly downstate. Here's what researchers say must be done to boost the effort and return to normalcy.

Joe Mahr and Alice Yin, Chicago Tribune

May 5, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/illinois-covid-19-vaccination-pace-100000494.html>

At first glance, there may not be a lot in common between the tiny downstate town of Arthur and Chicago's Englewood neighborhood.

Arthur is surrounded by flat farmland in the heart of Illinois' Amish country, a largely white, solidly Republican area. Englewood helps anchor Chicago's dense South Side, largely Black and reliably Democratic. But the unprecedented pandemic has spurred one similarity: low COVID-19 vaccination rates.

Such communities represent the new battlefield for Illinois to reach herd immunity — or, more likely, [something closer to it](#) — in the march toward normalcy.

Those who study and work in vaccinations say an already exhausted public health ecosystem must build and flex a different set of bureaucratic muscles. The goal? To lure the ambivalent or leery into their favorite doctors' offices or clinics where they can easily get a shot, or at least talk through concerns.

A Tribune analysis of federal and state data shows that there is plenty of work to do, with millions of adults remaining unvaccinated, and some regions now vaccinating so slowly that — if the pace doesn't change — it could take them a year or more to get close to herd immunity.

Those wide swaths of unvaccinated are covered by different levels of public health systems that, while broadly acknowledging the problem, offer varying details of how they'll try to boost rates to the point that communities can shed restrictions and make what's left of 2021 look more like 2019.

Making that harder, according to health officials and researchers, are largely two buckets of people.

One is a group adamant against getting a shot, a group that Arthur's mayor, Rod Randall, said is likely a key reason a Tribune analysis found his town's ZIP code had one of the lowest vaccination rates, at roughly just a tenth of residents having gotten a shot by mid-April.

"No amount of encouraging, or debate, or incentivizing will make a significant difference to many of the deliberately unvaccinated," he told the Tribune in an email.

But there are others who may be on the fence, either not sure it's worth the hassle or nervous about safety. Researchers and advocates say primary care doctors say may be able sway many in this group, if only public health agencies can get them more vaccine with less red tape.

“The easiest part of this whole process is giving the vaccine,” said Dr. Vishnu Chundi, chairman of the Chicago Medical Society’s COVID-19 task force. “The hardest part of this is all the paperwork and bureaucracy that goes with it.”

Federal, state and local officials say they’ve begun to change their approach, including plans to get more doses to primary doctors, reach out to homebound residents and partner more with community-based groups. And they’ve begun touting incentives such as free hair cuts and concerts, in Chicago, and sport-shooting targets at a downstate Department of Natural Resources complex.

“There’s a lot of free stuff I’ll be announcing for people who get vaccinated,” Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Tuesday.

The changing approach follows a clear slowdown in shots administered in Illinois and across the country, threatening state and federal officials’ goal to wipe out the virus.

Where are we at?

After a [slower start](#), Illinois has caught up and been among the faster states to vaccinate its population. By Tuesday, federal data showed Illinois ranked fourth out of the 10 largest states in the percent of population receiving at least one dose, at 47.4%. (Because of a lag in data collection, Illinois Department of Public Health figures may be slightly higher.)

Still, Illinois is seeing the same slowdown that’s occurring nationally.

In the first four weeks of April, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data shows Illinois’ rate of getting unvaccinated residents at least one shot dropped from 4.4% of all residents during the month’s first seven-day period to 2.9% by its fourth. That’s not as bad a dip as seen in most other big states, but still sizable.

Within Illinois, the drop has been far more profound downstate, with [clear signs of vaccine hesitancy](#) emerging more than a month ago in some parts, even as limits were removed to allow anyone 16 and older to get a shot.

The Pritzker administration has split the state into 11 health regions, and state data shows the pace of vaccinations peaked in early March in west-central and east-central Illinois, then by mid-March in three more downstate regions. Those regions closest to Chicago were the last to peak, around mid-April.

IDPH has estimated that between 75% to 85% of residents would need to be vaccinated for the state to reach so-called herd immunity, when COVID-19 would die out because it couldn’t easily find people to infect. It’s a rough estimate — scientists still say they don’t know the precise number — and [they’re increasingly doubtful](#) the nation will get there anytime soon.

Adding even more confusion, in Illinois, is that IDPH doesn’t publish data online that breaks down, in each region, how many people have gotten at least one dose.

The Tribune calculated estimates from a mix of data obtained from IDPH and the CDC. The Tribune estimate shows that the closest region to reaching that 75% threshold is the one encompassing DuPage and Kane counties, where more than 48% of all residents have gotten at least one shot by Tuesday. Close behind are suburban Cook County and Chicago, at about 47% and 45%, respectively.

But the numbers drop often the farther you get from Chicago. It’s about 40% of residents in the north-central region of Illinois, or 20 counties that stretch from Oswego to Bloomington, then west to the Iowa border. It drops close to 30% in the southern region, or the 20 counties spread from roughly Mount Vernon to Illinois’ southern tip and east to the Indiana line.

The data still isn’t precise. It doesn’t count Illinoisans who got shots across state borders, nor does it take into account the [latest census figures](#) suggesting there are more Illinoisans to vaccinate than previously estimated.

Still, the available data offers a sobering assessment of how long it could take to reach herd immunity.

In the southern region, the pace of vaccinations is so slow now that, in the past week, less than a percent of the population was added to the list of those who'd gotten any shot.

At that pace, the region would not approach 75% vaccination immunity for roughly a year, if not longer.

Compare that to the region for DuPage and Kane counties, where the weekly pace is so fast that, if it continues, the region could reach 75% vaccination by early July.

Paces could pick up, particularly with 12- to 15-year-olds likely to be [approved for shots](#). But researchers remain concerned about some regions lagging others.

For strongly vaccinated regions, researchers have said, the novel coronavirus will become far less of a community threat, while less vaccinated regions face the potential of major outbreaks that could still strain their health care systems.

"It's not really the statewide number," the state health director, Dr. Ngozi Ezike, told lawmakers during a virtual hearing last week. "It really matters what's happening in your very local community."

Unclear efforts to target places

To figure out which communities are most at risk, researchers say health officials should be making more precise measurements of who's not vaccinated yet.

"You have to start mapping out where are the neighborhoods that have the lower vaccination rates, not at the county level, but at census tract, or neighborhood, or ZIP code," said Julie Swann, an engineering professor at North Carolina State University who researches health care logistics.

The state collects detailed data on all shots that could pinpoint where vaccinations efforts are flailing. The Chicago Department of Public Health has used the data to publish vaccination rates by ZIP code online, as well as target certain ZIP codes and neighborhoods for "hyper local" vaccination pushes, said the agency's medical director, Dr. Candice Robinson.

"This is absolutely something we're very focused on still, making plans for continuing kind of that work, local within those communities," she said Tuesday.

Cook County Health has used that data as well to pinpoint ZIP codes where it believes uptake is low so it can work with the Chicago Medical Society to find doctors in those areas to help push vaccinations.

The Illinois Department of Public Health, which oversees efforts outside Chicago, did not answer questions in the past week about what specific research it has done to pinpoint low-vaccination areas across the state. It previously has said it uses data to dispatch its mobile vaccination teams. The governor last week told reporters the state also has "people going door to door," although his administration didn't respond to a question seeking specifics.

The Tribune has attempted to identify the poorly vaccinated areas using data it could obtain. Health agencies can strip raw vaccination data of identifying information and release it, but IDPH would not do so for the Tribune, saying it would be illegal to provide.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did that, however, for shots administered through mid-April. And an analysis of that data shows massive differences in the rate of those vaccinated in ZIP codes across Illinois.

Analyzing ZIP code data can be tricky because population estimates are imprecise. But the data suggests some ZIP codes were at or above 60% of residents getting at least one shot by mid-April, while others were far less. That includes Arthur, where the data suggests barely a tenth of residents had gotten a shot by then.

Hesitancy

The town of about 2,300 residents sits about 30 miles southwest of Champaign. It's surrounded by farmland that's home to about 4,000 Amish residents, according to the [town website](#).

In pre-pandemic times, the area pushed tourism, with festivals celebrating everything from bluegrass music to strawberry jam. Its website touts the town's motto of friendliness: "You're A Stranger Only Once."

Mayor Randall said the pandemic, however, has revealed a divide on how residents approach vaccination.

"Some of us believe we should be vaccinated for the common good, not just to protect ourselves, much like the wearing of face masks," he said in an email. "Others do not feel as strong of social obligation and have taken a stance of rugged individualism when it comes to COVID. There is very little that can be done to change that position."

The town straddles two counties whose health departments would be responsible for the vaccination efforts, Douglas and Moultrie. The latter did not respond to an email, but Douglas County said it suspected a decent amount of hesitancy could be within the Amish community. (It said it had been seeking ZIP code data itself to study, and asked the Tribune to provide its data, which the newspaper did.)

Douglas County's public health community liaison, Colleen Lehmann, said last week that she'd mailed out letters to two dozen bishops of Amish churches in the county to tout the benefits of vaccination, but had not yet gotten any responses.

Such hesitancy is not a surprise to those who study or work in public health, nor limited to certain religions, races or ethnicities.

In Englewood, resident Pamela Abrams, 59, survived COVID-19 and struggled with lingering fatigue. So did her daughter. Even still, the vaccine wasn't an automatic choice.

Abrams said she decided two months ago to get vaccinated but sensed so much skepticism over the vaccine's safety that she didn't tell her family.

"I was like, 'You know what, I'm not going to tell my kids I'm going to do it,'" she recalled, later adding: "I just prayed about it. I was like, 'Lord, cover me. Watch over me.'"

Soon, her daughter got the shot as well. But her son, she said, remains hesitant, in a ZIP code with one of the lowest vaccination rates in the city, less than a fourth of all residents.

The Abrams family follows a pattern of vaccine hesitancy that researchers have long anticipated.

There's the fear of something new, complicated by a social media ecosystem that can spread false information about dangers. Not helping boost confidence: the [recent pause](#) in using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine because of extremely rare, but potentially dangerous, side effects.

Perhaps more entrenched is the political divide after a year of shutdowns and mask mandates that pitted arguments for safety and vigilance against complaints the danger was overblown and governments had overreacted.

The debate largely followed party lines, with a sizable number of Republicans now saying they're unlikely to get vaccinated, despite the shots developed during former President Donald Trump's administration, Trump getting vaccinated and [calling the shots](#) "great" and "safe."

The CDC has published [survey data from mid-March](#) that was used to predict the percent of residents in each county who at the time felt they probably or definitely wouldn't get a shot. That ranges from just 12% in DuPage County to 19% of residents in four east-central Illinois counties.

Make it easy

If the CDC estimates hold true, that leaves millions more Illinoisans willing to get a shot who haven't yet.

To reach them, researchers and advocates say, you have to make getting a shot much easier.

Gone should be the days, they say, when people had to hunt around multiple, confusing websites to try to discern where to find shots, and then work around appointment windows.

“I think the challenge now is to bring the vaccine to where people are — in their neighborhood, in their communities, even in their workplaces and especially in their primary care providers,” said Rebecca Weintraub, the faculty director of the Global Health Delivery Project at Harvard University.

The shift is already occurring. Walgreens, Walmart and Sam’s Club, for example, have begun allowing [walk-in appointments](#), and Walgreens has been [dispatching a mobile clinic](#) in Chicago.

“We really want to make it as convenient as possible for people to be vaccinated,” said CDPH’s Robinson.

The Biden administration also on Tuesday [announced a host of efforts](#), including sending more doses to rural clinics. But the push to primary care may be difficult to pull off quickly.

It first requires a major change in how public health agencies have approached COVID-19 vaccinations. After all, back when supply was tight, public health agencies could easily herd the eager to big sites, even if those lucky enough to score a slot had to take off work or even drive several hours.

But today’s unvaccinated are far less likely to be able, or willing, to shape-shift their lives to get a shot, researchers said.

Now the process favors medical “touchpoints” — any time someone happens to come into contact with the health care system. Think of basic checkups or physicals, where a doctor or nurse asks if someone’s been vaccinated and can talk through concerns. For patients who decide to get shots, they can be injected on the spot.

That raises another challenge: making it easy for doctors too.

Traditional vaccinations, for things like measles and tetanus, have never been widely popular among many doctors who see adult patients, Chundi said, because of the additional regulatory requirements. It can take weeks to get signed up to use government registries, which then can take 15 to 20 minutes to fill out for each patient.

The COVID-19 vaccine has more bureaucratic hurdles too. Practices must order them through government agencies. And the vaccines are harder to mix, store and handle.

Chundi said most doctors are eager to help end the pandemic, and have been willing to sacrifice to do it, but need public health agencies to help work through the roadblocks.

“We’re having to adjust our lives to what the policymakers want all the time. But at the end of the day, that’s hard to do as a primary care office, where you’re going to have to re-engineer your office for this. It should be the other way around,” he said.

Public health officials, to varying degrees, have said they’ve already begun or plan to begin creating a system that gets more doses to primary care offices, beyond the recently announced federal push.

But the public health agencies are also banking on everyday residents becoming pseudo-ambassadors of the vaccine to friends and family. One example: South Shore resident Desiree Taylor.

Taylor, 29, a home care provider, used to be hesitant, after reading what she now says were misleading Facebook posts. Amid her hesitancy, she was approached by a patient’s wife, who asked Taylor to rethink her fears.

So she did her own research, got the shot and now says she takes a similar tact in how she approaches hesitant friends and family.

“I try to let people know, ‘Yes, I was against it. I was the one that was saying no, I’m not going to do this,’” Taylor said. “Now I try to tell people it’s OK.”



Where Can You Get the Johnson & Johnson Vaccine in the Chicago Area?

May 5, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/where-can-get-the-johnson-and-johnson-vaccine-in-the-chicago-area/2502734/>

With the Johnson & Johnson vaccine resuming in Illinois, where can residents seeking the single-shot COVID vaccine find appointments?

U.S. health officials lifted [an 11-day pause on the Johnson & Johnson single-dose COVID vaccine late last month](#), allowing vaccinations to resume following reports of an extremely rare blood clot.

Both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined the benefits outweigh the risks, emphasizing both have confidence the vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19.

There are a number of options currently available in the Chicago area. It's important to note, however, that while anyone over the age of 16 is eligible for vaccinations in Illinois, only those 18 and older can receive the J&J vaccine.

United Center

From May 4 through May 10, the vaccination site will strictly offer the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine for walk-in appointments.

The United Center site operates seven days a week and was originally slated to be open for eight weeks with the ability to administer 6,000 shots per day at full capacity, officials said. Those doses have been provided directly from the federal government and not diverted from the supply sent to Chicago or Illinois.

More details [here](#).

Apostolic Church

A special vaccination event will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on May 8 at the Apostolic Faith Church, 3823 S. Indiana Ave.

Anyone who is vaccinated at this event with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be offered a free ticket to attend a May 22 concert for the Protect Chicago Music Series. Appointments are preferred, but not required, and can be scheduled at <https://rebrand.ly/MusicSeries>.

Kane County

Kane County's Health Department said the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will return to its vaccination centers this week.

As of Wednesday, appointments were still available for the J&J vaccine on May 8.

Click [here](#) to book an appointment.

Kankakee County

As part of Illinois' rural vaccination team program, 1,200 Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses will be available on a walk-in basis at Kankakee First Church of the Nazarene between May 18 and 20.

LaSalle County

Under that same program, residents can walk-in for Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses, while supplies last, at the Illinois Valley Community Center, located in Ottawa, on May 12.

More details on both clinics, and on other locations, [can be found here](#).

Chicago State University

Drive-thru vaccinations at Chicago State University use the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Appointments are not required. The drive-thru is open from noon until 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. The drive-thru is closed on Sundays.

Tinley Park

Cook County Health's Tinley Park mass vaccination site resumed offering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine on April 28, officials said.

The site will continue to offer the Moderna vaccine as well, but individuals can choose which vaccine they prefer to receive. The site is open for appointments and walk-ins for people age 6 over the age of 18.

Walk-ins are welcome at all Cook County Health mass vaccination sites, but individuals can still make appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

For more ways to find vaccine appointments in Illinois, click [here](#).



Suburban Cook County Officials Hope to Fully Reopen This Summer

Kristen Thometz

May 5, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/05/05/suburban-cook-county-officials-hope-fully-reopen-summer>

Suburban Cook County officials hope to fully reopen, with no restrictions on businesses, around the same time as Chicago.

“All metrics are beginning to look better and better in suburban Cook County, and we’re in alignment and in communication with the city of Chicago,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Chicago officials announced Tuesday [they plan to fully reopen by July 4](#).

“We hope to do the same,” Rubin said, though she could not provide an exact reopening date. “We are working very closely with Chicago so we’ll have a similar, if not identical reopening schedule.”

Even once capacity restrictions are removed, masking will still be required, Rubin added.

Before suburban Cook County or the city can fully reopen, the state must first enter the bridge phase of its reopening plan, which eases capacity limits from 50% to 60% at restaurants, stores, amusement parks, gyms, theaters and offices.

In order to move into the bridge phase, at least 70% of all Illinois residents ages 65 and older must have received at least a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and the entire state must maintain at least 20% availability of intensive care unit beds while holding steady on COVID-19 hospital admissions, mortality rates and case rates over a 28-day monitoring period.

Officials have said the bridge phase could begin as early as next week as nearly 80% of Illinois residents ages 65 and older have been vaccinated and other metrics are trending in the right direction. However, regions of the state, as categorized in Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s reopening plan, can delay entry into the bridge phase by continuing to implement stricter mitigations than what the state allows.

“We hope to move to the bridge phase if not on the same date as the state is doing then soon after,” said Rubin.

The county’s test positivity rate is 4.9%, down from 5.1% 10 days ago, according to the most recent [data available from the Illinois Department of Public Health](#). Hospitalizations have declined for the last 10 consecutive days, but for nine days, the availability of intensive care beds has dipped below 20%.



Preckwinkle encourages Cook County residents to get vaccinated for Mother's Day

May 5, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/preckwinkle-encourages-cook-county-residents-to-get-vaccinated-for-mothers-day>

Are you still not sure what to get the favorite woman in your life for [Mother's Day](#)? How about a [COVID-19 vaccine](#)?

So far, 50% of all eligible residents in [Cook County](#) have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

In order to make getting your shot a more enjoyable experience, Cook County Health is partnering with the Chicago Federation of Musicians. They'll be performing at mass vaccine sites in [Des Plaines](#), [Tinley Park](#) and [Forest Park](#) on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Cook County President [Toni Preckwinkle](#) is encouraging everyone to get their shots for their moms and grandmother's.

"This Mother's Day really is about next Mother's Day," Preckwinkle said. "It's about doing all we can to ensure that our families can be together safely, and that our children and grandchildren are protected against COVID-19."

Suburban Cook County is hoping to fully reopen by the July 4.



With COVID Vaccinations for Ages 12-15 Expected, Chicago-Area Administrators Prepare

Emergency use authorization is expected within days for the Pfizer vaccine to be given to kids ages 12 to 15

Lauren Petty

May 5, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/with-vaccinations-for-ages-12-15-imminent-chicago-area-administrators-prepare/2503217/>

Pediatricians, children's hospitals and county health departments are making plans as the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine nears emergency use approval for kids ages 12 to 15.

"I don't want to get ahead of the FDA, but I believe it's gonna be within several days. I cannot imagine it's gonna be much longer than that," Dr. Anthony Fauci said Wednesday.

At Northwestern Children's Practice in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood, pediatricians have the Pfizer vaccine ready to go in the specialized freezer it requires. Parents can schedule the shots for kids in the approved age group once the FDA and the CDC give the okay.

Dr. Scott Goldstein, a pediatrician at the practice, said parents have been waiting for this.

"They've been asking about it for months, and now more and more every day that we're getting closer to approving it for the 12 and up group," Goldstein said.

The subzero storage may be a challenge for some pediatricians to offer it in-office.

"I think a lot of parents probably would feel more comfortable getting in their pediatrician's office, but whether you get it at the pediatrician or the pharmacy or health department, I think the shot is the shot at that point," Goldstein said.

A spokesperson for Cook County Health said administrators at its five locations offering the Pfizer vaccine will welcome children, accompanied by a parent, once the FDA and CDC give the green light. Parents can make appointments and walk-ins will also be welcome.

Chris Hoff, the Director for Community Health Resources in DuPage County, said children ages 12-15, accompanied by a parent, will be accepted at the community vaccination site at the DuPage County Fairgrounds.

"The goal will be to make sure the vaccine is widely available to a group that really should be prioritized for vaccine, especially as we look to school in the fall and reduction in transmission all over the community," Hoff said.

In a statement, Hannah Goering, spokesperson for the Lake County Health Department, wrote, "We are still working through the details on logistics and are eagerly awaiting this authorization. In addition to offering appointments (with a parent or legal guardian present) at our mass vaccination sites, we are working with area pediatricians and family medicine doctors to help get them set up to offer COVID-19 to their child patients and their families and have over 100 healthcare providers lined up so far."

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital [is now scheduling appointments](#) for ages 16 and up, and will offer appointments to age 12 to 15 once the approval happens.

A spokesperson for Advocate Children's Hospital said the hospital "will be ready immediately to begin scheduling adolescents 12-15."

"We are currently already doing ages 16-18," the spokesperson said. "Will not have to be Advocate Aurora patients—we will immunize anyone in that age group. We cannot schedule until approval, but parents will be able to go to www.aah.org to schedule, once approved."

Colette Nesbitt, 12, is eager to get vaccinated, according to her mom, Danielle Nesbitt.

"She really wants to do her part, and to help other people get back to that sort of sense of normalcy," Nesbitt said. "We will have a conversation with our pediatrician and get her signed up to get vaccinated. I know she's anxious."

For parents who have concerns, Goldstein said the information provided from clinical trials has shown the Pfizer vaccine is safe for kids.

"It looks to be a very safe, very effective, you know 100% effectiveness in kids of that age group," Goldstein said.

Parents who have questions are encouraged to talk to their child's pediatrician.

Daily Herald

Get vaccinated for your mom this Sunday, health officials suggest

Marni Pyke

May 6, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210505/get-vaccinated-for-your-mom-this-sunday-health-officials-suggest>

As COVID-19 vaccination fever wanes, Cook County officials urged suburbanites to roll up their sleeves for Mom this Sunday.

"This Mother's Day really is about next Mother's Day," Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle said at a briefing Wednesday. "This year, all your mom wants for Mother's Day is for you to get your vaccine. It's one of the greatest gifts you can give your mother. You can walk into any mass site, it will cost you nothing and it could save your mother's life."

Cook County Department of Public Health Co-Lead Rachel Rubin said she lost her mother and father to COVID-19 during the pandemic.

"Losing a parent to COVID-19 when your day job is spent trying to control spread of the disease is hard," Rubin said. However, her college-age daughter recently was vaccinated, and "that was the best present she could ever give me."

The appeal comes as the state hits a seven-day average of 71,219 shots in arms compared to 105,779 a day a month ago.

Cook County was set to give its 700,000th COVID-19 vaccine dose at a mass vaccination site Wednesday, Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said. Three vaccines are approved -- Moderna's and Pfizer's two-dose versions and a one-dose shot from Johnson & Johnson.

Asked why numbers are lagging, Rocha said "we see a lot of individuals in the 18 to 40 age category who have resistance" to vaccines. In addition, Black and Hispanic residents aren't getting vaccinated at the same percentages as others, he added.

Young adults who consider themselves "invincible" are among the least likely to get vaccinated, Preckwinkle said.

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced Tuesday their expectations to reopen the city and state on July 4.

"We hope to do the same," Rubin said. "I can't give you a direct 'yes,' but everything seems to be moving in the right direction" regarding COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

As a further incentive to get vaccinated, the Chicago Federation of Music musicians will serenade during inoculations at mass sites in Des Plaines, Forest Park, Tinley Park and Matteson from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

COVID Vaccine for 12-to-15-Year-Olds: What Parents Should Know Ahead of FDA Ruling

Here's what experts are saying

May 5, 2021

<https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/coronavirus/covid-vaccine-for-12-to-15-year-olds-what-parents-should-know/2597378/>

With the U.S. Food and Drug Administration [expected to authorize emergency use of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for kids aged 12 to 15](#) potentially by next week, what can parents expect and what is known so far about the COVID vaccines and children?

Here's what experts are saying.

When Could Kids 12 to 15 Get the COVID Vaccine?

A federal official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to preview the FDA's action, told the Associated Press the agency was expected to expand its emergency use authorization for Pfizer's two-dose vaccine by early next week, and perhaps even sooner. The person familiar with the process, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal matters, confirmed the timeline and added that it is expected that the FDA will approve Pfizer's use by even younger children sometime this fall.

The FDA action will be followed by a meeting of a federal vaccine advisory committee to discuss whether to recommend the shot for 12- to 15-year-olds. Shots could begin after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention adopts the committee's recommendation. Those steps could be completed in a matter of days.

Pfizer isn't the only company seeking to lower the age limit for its vaccine. Results also are expected by the middle of this year from a U.S. study of Moderna's vaccine in 12-to -17-year-olds.

But what about younger kids?

According to experts, those under 12 likely won't be able to receive the COVID vaccine until later this year or early next year.

Is the Vaccine Safe for Children?

While many eagerly await a consensus from the FDA and the CDC, some health experts say data so far indicates the vaccine is safe for younger age groups.

"It is safe," Dr. Markeita Moore, a pediatrician with Advocate Children's Hospital, said during a Facebook Live Wednesday. "Yes, we highly recommend it - us and the [American Academy of Pediatrics]."

How Effective is the Vaccine for Younger Groups?

The authorization announcement is set to come a month after Pfizer said its shot, which is the only COVID vaccine authorized in the U.S. for those age 16 and older, also provided protection for the younger population.

Pfizer in late March released preliminary results from a vaccine study of 2,260 U.S. volunteers ages 12 to 15, showing there were no cases of [COVID-19](#) among fully vaccinated adolescents compared with 18 among those given dummy shots.

"Now what's important to note is that ... there have been clinical trials that have been going on for 12- to 15-year-olds, so this has been studied in this age group," Dr. Candice Robinson, medical director for the Chicago Department of Public Health, said Tuesday. "The same way it was studied in the adults before it was authorized for use in adults, it's also been studied in our 12- to 15-year-olds as well. And what they found [is] it works for most studies. The high level overviews work very well, been very protective in that age group, and they found no serious safety or concerns about that, and so we'll get more of that data as the FDA ... makes that decision."

Do Kids Need the Vaccine When They Haven't Been Affected by the Virus as Much as Adults?

According to doctors at Advocate Children's Hospital, the answer is yes.

"We've had kids hospitalized since the beginning of the pandemic, some who have been quite ill," Moore said. "We also in June of this past year, started to see the inflammatory syndrome that we've mentioned before... and those kids can be very sick down to very young ages, down to toddler ages."

Dr. Frank Belmonte, chief medical officer at Advocate Children's Hospital, also noted that children getting vaccinated can help prevent spread among adults as well.

"Actually, in that 12 to 18 age range, there's about a 20% transmissibility," he said. "So even if they don't get, you know, really sick from the virus they can spread it to family members or to other vulnerable folks in their community."

Do Children Experience the Same Side Effects?

Kids had side effects similar to young adults, Pfizer said. The main side effects are pain, fever, chills and fatigue, particularly after the second dose. The study will continue to track participants for two years for more information about long-term protection and safety.

Robinson also noted that sore arms and similar common side effects associated with the vaccine were most common for younger populations receiving the vaccine, but said no concerns have so far been raised, though additional data is expected to be released.

"I think the side effect profiles for kids are probably some of the same things we see, you know, with vaccines with adults," she said. "The sore arms and things like that are kind of the most common side effects after vaccination and things that kids see after their vaccination with their routine vaccinations, as well, but no serious safety concerns have been identified with the use of Pfizer in this age group at this time."

Moore echoed that claim, saying side effects for the younger group will likely be similar to 16- to 25-year-olds.

"They will have the same type of side effects as the 16 through the 25 group, which is injection site pain, which is fatigue, which is headaches," he said. "So those are the most common ones... It's not permanent, it is transient for about 24 to 48 hours."

Chicago's top doctor also said preliminary information did not indicate younger groups saw more or less side effects than others.

"From the preliminary information that I've seen, they were not seeing higher side effects in kids, and they were seeing very, very good levels of protection when they look for antibodies in the blood. [It's] actually been a little better than what they'd seen in the young adults," CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said.

What is the Guidance for Parents Should the Vaccine be Recommended by Federal Officials?

"The recommendation for parents [is] the same as they get for vaccinations themselves," Robinson said. "You really want to get your kid vaccinated to make sure that they are covered and protected [to] get that most protection from that vaccine against COVID. So the recommendation will be ... the same if the FDA authorizes it."

Arwady also noted that, assuming both the FDA and CDC recommend use of the vaccine in such populations, earlier vaccinations will be beneficial for some.

"Don't wait until, you know, just prior to school," she said. "We know kids are wanting to do sports this summer and go to camp and be with friends, and we still have a lot of COVID around... When I think about being able to have kids over 12 vaccinated, we know older kids, you know, are more likely to spread COVID than the youngest kids. And so [I'm] really excited about the possibility of having a vaccine."

Is the Vaccine Safe for Kids With Seasonal and Peanut Allergies?

According to the doctors at Advocate Children's Hospital, the answer is yes.

Where Will You Be Able to Get the Vaccine for Kids Ages 12-15 If It is Approved?

At Northwestern Children's Practice in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood, pediatricians have the Pfizer vaccine ready to go in the specialized freezer it requires. Parents can schedule the shots for kids in the approved age group once the FDA and the CDC give the okay.

But the subzero storage may be a challenge for some pediatricians to offer it in-office.

"I think a lot of parents probably would feel more comfortable getting in their pediatrician's office, but whether you get it at the pediatrician or the pharmacy or health department, I think the shot is the shot at that point," Dr. Scott Goldstein, a pediatrician at Northwestern Children's Practice said.

A spokesperson for Cook County Health said administrators at its five locations offering the Pfizer vaccine will welcome children, accompanied by a parent, once the FDA and CDC give the green light. Parents can make appointments and walk-ins will also be welcome.

Chris Hoff, the Director for Community Health Resources in DuPage County, said children ages 12-15, accompanied by a parent, will be accepted at the community vaccination site at the DuPage County Fairgrounds.

"The goal will be to make sure the vaccine is widely available to a group that really should be prioritized for vaccine, especially as we look to school in the fall and reduction in transmission all over the community," Hoff said.

In a statement, Hannah Goering, spokesperson for the Lake County Health Department, wrote, "We are still working through the details on logistics and are eagerly awaiting this authorization. In addition to offering appointments (with a parent or legal guardian present) at our mass vaccination sites, we are working with area pediatricians and family medicine doctors to help get them set up to offer COVID-19 to their child patients and their families and have over 100 healthcare providers lined up so far."

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital [is now scheduling appointments](#) for ages 16 and up, and will offer appointments to age 12 to 15 once the approval happens.

A spokesperson for Advocate Children's Hospital said the hospital "will be ready immediately to begin scheduling adolescents 12-15."

"We are currently already doing ages 16-18," the spokesperson said. "Will not have to be Advocate Aurora patients—we will immunize anyone in that age group. We cannot schedule until approval, but parents will be able to go to www.aah.org to schedule, once approved."

What Can You Do If Your Children Aren't Old Enough to Get Vaccinated?

"Both Pfizer and Moderna currently have studies that are ongoing for vaccine down to six months so maybe into next year we may actually see vaccine for our people less than 12 years of age, so stay tuned for that and keep looking out," Robinson said. "But in the meantime, you know, there will still be some protective things that you will need, the children will need to continue to do because they can't get vaccinated. So still make sure they're washing their hands, wearing

their masks, social distancing in the appropriate settings and following the CDC guidance for persons who are unvaccinated."

Chicago's top doctor also said that vaccinating those who are eligible around the children can also keep them protected.

"If you can get all the adults vaccinated around the kids risk really goes down a lot, " Arwady said. "And then assuming teenagers coming here too - I don't know if you've got an older brother or cousin, etc. - but like, you know, the best way to be protected is to be surrounded by a lot of people who are vaccinated themselves. And then as our case numbers go down here, right, like the risk will go lower and lower and lower."

Will There Be Exceptions for Younger Children With Certain Conditions?

According to experts, the answer is likely no.

"No exceptions," Moore said. "We have to go with the [emergency use authorization] usage."

Chicago Tribune

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Dan Petrella, Alice Yin and Jenny Whidden

May 6, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-illinois-pritzker-20210506-57y56wkv6vqefjqzrub2eqt5fe-story.html>

Offering the promise of a summer resembling something close to normal, Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Thursday that he will [further ease coronavirus-related restrictions](#) May 14 as a precursor to a full reopening as soon as June 11.

“The light that we can see at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter and brighter,” Pritzker said, though he cautioned that an unexpected resurgence of COVID-19 in the next few weeks still could delay the planned reopening.

Pritzker’s announcement puts the state on a more ambitious timeline than the city of Chicago, which Mayor Lori Lightfoot said this week is aiming for a full reopening by the Fourth of July. While she’s been critical of some of Pritzker’s rules throughout the pandemic, Lightfoot has repeatedly shown a willingness to keep tighter restrictions in place.

A Lightfoot spokeswoman released a statement saying the city is on course to move to the bridge phase with the rest of the state next Friday.

“While we have made significant progress and look forward to taking this step next week, we will only be able to fully reopen when we see continued improvement in COVID metrics and more widespread vaccine uptake,” the statement said.

The state already has met the vaccination thresholds established in the revised reopening plan Pritzker laid out in March, but he said the best way to stay on track is for more people to continue getting their shots, an effort that has slowed in recent weeks.

To spur more people to get vaccinated, particularly those who are hesitant, Pritzker said the state now is allowing individual doctors’ offices to sign up to receive doses, which experts say is a key step to getting more people immunized.

With federal officials expected to give the OK as soon as next week for 12- to 15-year-olds to receive Pfizer’s vaccine, the state is including pediatricians in that process.

“Illinois is doing everything that we can to make this vaccine as easy and accessible as possible for all who want it,” Pritzker said.

Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said doctors’ offices, including those of pediatricians, can sign up immediately to become eligible to receive vaccines. The approval process will take a week or two, she said.

The governor did say that even when capacity limits and other restrictions on businesses are lifted, mask requirements will remain in place until federal health officials say it’s safe to go without them in crowds and public indoor settings.

Pritzker’s bridge phase, set to begin May 14, would allow a wide range of businesses, including gyms, museums and ticketed and seated spectator events, to increase capacity limits to 60%.

The governor announced his revised reopening plan with much anticipation in mid-March, only to see it delayed by a new surge in cases and hospitalizations across the state.

In addition to the vaccination requirements that have since been met, the plan requires a sustained decline in new cases, hospitalizations and daily mortality rate before further reopening.

The only metric now moving in the wrong direction is fatalities. The state has seen a seven-day average of 30 additional fatalities for four days in a row, up from an average of 18 one month ago. Officials reported 40 additional fatalities Thursday, the highest since the same number of deaths was recorded April 15.

Although COVID-19 deaths are continuing to rise, Pritzker said the trend won't hold back his reopening plans because it is "a lagging indicator, not a leading indicator," with a rise in deaths coming weeks after an initial surge in new cases.

"It pains me every day to see those numbers and think about the families that are affected by those deaths, but we make decisions going forward based on as much leading indicator information as we can," he said.

The seven-day average of total hospitalizations has been slowly declining after peaking April 22 during the recent spring surge. The average is 2,013 as of Wednesday, the lowest since an average of 1,981 was recorded April 15.

As of Wednesday night, 2,115 people in Illinois were hospitalized with COVID-19, with 483 patients in intensive care units and 243 patients on ventilators.

Officials reported 1,778 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19, resulting from 96,296 tests.

The seven-day positivity rate statewide for cases as a share of total tests is 3.0% as of Wednesday, the lowest since the same rate was reported March 27.

The number of residents who have been fully vaccinated — receiving both of the required shots, or Johnson & Johnson's single shot — reached 4,282,681, or 33.61% of the total population. As of Thursday, 55.7% of those 16 and older have received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine.

Roughly 85% of those 65 and older in Illinois have received at least one dose, and 66% are fully vaccinated, according to federal data.

"As the most vulnerable have been overwhelmingly vaccinated, we can project that we shouldn't see a significant spike if the current circumstances remain the same," Ezike said.

The vaccines currently in use so far have been shown to be effective against the variants of the virus circulating in Illinois, she said, and health officials will continue monitoring for new mutations.

Over the last seven days, an average of 70,063 vaccines were administered daily, the lowest average since late February, when doses were still scarce.

But the vaccination effort could get a big boost next week if an advisory panel for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention votes as expected at its meeting Wednesday to recommend Pfizer's vaccine — currently authorized for those 16 and older — for younger adolescents. The CDC and the Food and Drug Administration so far have followed the panel's recommendations at every step of the vaccine rollout.

Health officials in Chicago and suburban Cook County already are gearing up for vaccinating younger residents, with Chicago's top health official predicting Thursday that young people across the city could start getting their first Pfizer shot as soon as the day after the federal government gives its approval.

The city has been preparing hospitals, pharmacy chains and its own mass vaccination sites to be ready when the Pfizer vaccine obtains emergency use authorization for 12- to 15-year-olds in the U.S., public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said Thursday.

Providers would be able to begin administering the vaccine "pretty much right away," Arwady said.

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Though Lurie is preparing to give shots to kids ages 12 to 15 at its main downtown facility once they are eligible, it is still determining the feasibility of vaccinating kids at outpatient sites, such as doctors' offices, said Dr. Larry Kociolek, pediatric infectious diseases physician at Lurie.

"We need to balance the need for widened vaccine access with risk of wasting doses if not all are used prior to expiring" because the pool of eligible children will still be relatively small and because Pfizer vaccines expire without cold storage, he said.

All Chicago-run mass vaccination sites offering Pfizer also will start accepting 12- to 15-year-olds when the time comes. Finally, all pharmacy chains in the city have been briefed with the Chicago Department of Public Health to be "ready to go" as well, Arwady said.

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Suburban Cook County health officials also said Thursday they are making preparations to vaccinate 12- to 15-year-olds following the anticipated FDA and CDC authorization. While not elaborating on the exact timing, Cook County Health said in a news release an announcement on how that rollout will look will "likely be soon" after Pfizer's approval.

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https://news.yahoo.com/gov-j-b-pritzker-says-190400452.html?quccounter=1&quce_referrer=aHR0cDovL3RyYW5zaXRpb24ubWVsdHdhGvYmNvbS8&quce_referrer_sig=AQAAAI9KerBQQPxcd_rfJ4Ka2c-RIbafq7a4c6bBaZPaJZ5qSBgAqVxe7me1_idOL9iRm7OupYcAep-HC95hkipXyS84n23LJsP7gmGa-xbc4j20u5qiPjli5wELX0MMfqoh4Q-5eVcqF3wJEEaAorwiuzDLq0OUhlsnaQJ3YfbAuJmZ

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All Chicago-run mass vaccination sites offering Pfizer also will start accepting 12- to 15-year-olds when the time comes. Finally, all pharmacy chains in the city have been briefed with the Chicago Department of Public Health to be “ready to go” as well, Arwady said.

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Suburban Cook County health officials also said Thursday they are making preparations to vaccinate 12- to 15-year-olds following the anticipated FDA and CDC authorization. While not elaborating on the exact timing, Cook County Health said in a news release an announcement on how that rollout will look will “likely be soon” after Pfizer’s approval.

To prepare for the influx of younger patients, Cook County Health will expand hours at its mass vaccination sites to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday. Those changes go into effect Tuesday at all locations with the Pfizer vaccine, which are: Matteson, Triton College, South Suburban College, Des Plaines and Forest Park. Tinley Park, which only offers Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, will remain open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

The Cook County Health Department sites will continue to accept walk-ins, although people can still make appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday.



Cook County Expands Vaccination Hours, Prepares to Vaccinate Children Over 12

May 6, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-expands-vaccination-hours-prepares-to-vaccinate-children-over-12/2503959/>

Cook County will extend hours at several mass vaccination sites across the area in preparation to vaccinate more residents, including children age 12 and older, officials announced Thursday.

Beginning May 11, five mass vaccination sites in Cook County will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, according to officials.

Here are the locations offering extended hours:

Matteson

Address: 4647 Promenade Way

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Wednesday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

River Grove

Address: 2000 5th Avenue, Triton College

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Forest Park

Address: 7630 W. Roosevelt Rd.

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Des Plaines

Address: 1155 E Oakton Street

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

South Holland

Address: 15800 State Street, South Suburban College

Vaccine: Pfizer

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All the above locations offer both appointment-based and walk-in vaccinations, according to the county.

Officials noted that 16 and 17-year-olds will not be eligible at the Tinley Park location as the Pfizer vaccine is the only option currently approved for emergency use in that age group. Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

The Tinley Park site, located at 18451 Convention Center Drive, will not offer extended hours and will, instead, remain open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday, officials said. Those age 18 years and older have the choice between Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

Click [here](#) for more information on booking an appointment in Cook County, or call (833) 308-1988.

Cook County Health said officials will make a public announcement when they expect to offer the Pfizer vaccine to children age 12 and older, which they noted would likely be "soon after the FDA and CDC provide authorization."

Vaccinations are also available at the following smaller-scale Priority Vaccination Sites between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. until the locations switch to extended hours next week:

Summit Recreation Center

Communities served: Summit, McCook, Hodgkins, Justice, Bridgeview and Chicago Ridge

Extended hours: Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Thornton Fractional High School South, Lansing

Communities served: Lansing, Calumet City, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Harvey, South Holland, Dolton and Burnham

Extended hours: Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

West Leyden High School, Northlake

Communities served: Norridge, Harwood Heights, Melrose Park, Maywood, Bellwood, Stone Park, Berkeley, Northlake, and Franklin Park

Extended hours: Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Hours added at Cook County mass vaccination sites ahead of authorization for kids

May 6, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/hours-added-at-cook-county-mass-vaccination-sites-ahead-of-authorization-for-kids>

Cook County Health announced Thursday an expansion of hours at several mass vaccination sites as federal officials near approving the Pfizer [vaccine](#) for children ages 12 to 15.

Starting May 11, five of the county's mass vaccination sites will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is currently authorized for people aged 16 and up.

The following locations will be offering extended hours:

Matteson, 4647 Promenade Way (Pfizer)

River Grove- Triton College, 2000 5th Avenue (Pfizer)

South Holland- South Suburban College, 15800 State Street (Pfizer)

Des Plaines, 1155 E Oakton Street (Pfizer)

Forest Park, 7630 West Roosevelt Road (Pfizer)

Walk-in appointments are still available at all [Cook County](#) mass vaccination sites.

Chicago Tribune

Chicago's ready to vaccinate 12- to 15-year-olds 'pretty much right away' once federal government gives OK, health commissioner says

Alice Yin

May 6, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-chicago-vaccine-pfizer-12-15-year-olds-children-20210506-dvhmhdvqfzqudlu6mkenahpcu4-story.html>

Some Chicagoans ages 12 to 15 could be fully vaccinated from the coronavirus by June, the city's top health official said Thursday while predicting youths across the city could start getting their first Pfizer vaccine shot as soon as the day after the federal government gives its approval.

The city has been preparing hospitals, pharmacy chains and its own mass vaccination sites for when the Pfizer vaccine obtains emergency use authorization for 12- to 15-year-olds in the U.S., public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said during a question-and-answer session. That day could come next week, The Associated Press [reported](#), with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval likely coming next week and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's adoption of that recommendation anticipated soon after.

"Pretty much right away," Arwady said when asked Thursday how quickly Chicago would roll out vaccines for 12- to 15-year-olds after authorization. "We have been planning for this for a long time. ... I would expect as soon as the next day we will probably be ready to go."

The CDC's advisory panel [has a meeting scheduled Wednesday](#) to consider whether to recommend emergency use of the Pfizer vaccine for 12- to 15-year-olds. The CDC and FDA so far have followed all of the panel's recommendations for the coronavirus vaccines.

Arwady didn't elaborate on whether the rollout for those children will entail walk-ins — which have been the status quo since late last month when the city at last had enough vaccine supply to meet demand — or whether it will at first require online or phone appointments to avoid long waits. But Arwady said she was confident that the groundwork was there for immediate inoculations. Currently, Pfizer is the only vaccine approved for 16- and 17-year-olds in the U.S.

The city has worked to prepare children's hospitals such as Lurie Children's Hospital for Pfizer's next stage, Arwady said while noting those sites tend to have the ultracold storage needed for that vaccine. All Chicago-run mass vaccination sites offering Pfizer also will start accepting 12- to 15-year-olds when the time comes. Finally, all pharmacy chains in the city have been briefed with the Chicago Department of Public Health to be "ready to go" as well, Arwady said.

Children under 18 will continue to need a parent or guardian to supervise the Pfizer shot, Arwady said. And because that brand requires two doses, the earliest 12- to 15-year-olds who get the shot would be fully vaccinated is in June.

Chicago's COVID-19 metrics as of Wednesday showed a continued decline, with the seven-day rolling positivity rate at 4.5%, versus the 4.6% rate a week ago. The daily average caseload was at 505, a 4% drop from the previous week but still above Arwady's preferred ceiling of 400.

Suburban Cook County health officials also said Thursday they are making preparations to vaccinate 12- to 15-year-olds following the anticipated FDA and CDC authorization. While not elaborating on the exact timing, Cook County Health said in a news release an announcement on how that rollout will look will "likely be soon" after Pfizer's approval.

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Inside Look: Mass Vaccination Sites in Cook County

For months, thousands of Illinoisans have been visiting mass vaccination sites to get their COVID-19 vaccine. How long will they stick around?

Chris Hush

May 6, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/inside-look-mass-vaccination-sites-in-cook-county/2504248/>

Despite a slow-down in vaccinations across the country, mass vaccination sites have been credited with putting a dent in getting large swaths of the population vaccinated.

It may seem like these sites appeared almost overnight. That's far from the truth.

Cook County Health gave NBC 5 exclusive access to a mass vaccination site in Des Plaines, which is one of six in Cook County and reportedly one of the busiest.

The site was constructed inside an empty Kmart that had been sitting empty for years, according to Cook County Bureau Chief of Asset Management, John Yonan.

"Our biggest challenge was the condition of it," said Yonan. "There was a leaky roof that needed to be fixed."

In fact, Yonan said dressing rooms and a jewelry counter were still in place -- relics of the big box store it once was.

Even ceiling panels, floor tiles and lighting had to be replaced.

What made this site prime was the open floor plan, he said, allowing nurses to see from one end of the building to the other.

"If someone needed assistance, a number of folks could be able to see that and that part of the open floor plan was unique to this location," said Yonan.

Yonan said the facility costs the county about \$150,000 a month. He said FEMA is expected to refund the county.

Adam Weber, Director of Clinical Applications for Cook County, helped secure a plethora of printers and tablets for each of the county's six mass vaccination sites.

Weber said he's proud to have helped Cook County reach more than 700,000 vaccinations in just a few months.

Even as vaccinations slow, he says more than 2,000 people a day still come in for vaccinations.

Inside stands a steel gate, manned by the National Guard. This is where Catanya Norwood, Senior Director of Pharmacy Services, said the "liquid gold" is kept.

Since March, the Des Plaines mass vaccination site has only had to throw out one vaccine, according to Norwood -- something Norwood said she's proud of.

"Zero waste with our liquid gold; what can you say?" said Norwood.

To see the full tour, watch the video above.



COVID Vaccine for 12-15: When Will Pfizer Vaccine Be Available for Kids? Here's What We Know

Here's what experts are saying

May 7, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/covid-vaccine-for-12-15-when-will-pfizer-vaccine-be-available-for-kids-heres-what-we-know/2504964/>

When will the COVID vaccine be available for kids? The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is [expected to authorize emergency use of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 12 to 15](#) potentially by next week.

So what can parents expect and what is known so far about the COVID vaccines and children? Here's what experts are saying:

When Could Kids 12 to 15 Get the COVID Vaccine?

A federal official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to preview the FDA's action, told the Associated Press the agency was expected to expand its emergency use authorization for Pfizer's two-dose vaccine by early next week. The person familiar with the process confirmed the timeline and added that it is expected that the FDA will approve Pfizer's use by even younger children sometime this fall.

The FDA action will be followed by a meeting of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's federal vaccine advisory committee, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (known as ACIP), to discuss whether to recommend the shot for 12- to 15-year-olds.

The ACIP has already set an emergency meeting to discuss and vote on the FDA's authorization, scheduled for Wednesday. The committee will meet virtually beginning at 10 a.m. CT, with a vote scheduled to take place after discussion beginning at 1:45 p.m., per an agenda posted on the CDC's website.

Those steps could be completed in a matter of days, and shots could begin after CDC adopts the committee's recommendation.

Pfizer isn't the only company seeking to lower the age limit for its vaccine. Results also are expected by the middle of this year from a U.S. study of Moderna's vaccine in 12-to -17-year-olds. Pfizer is currently authorized for use on people ages 16 and up, while Moderna is authorized for people 18 and older.

What about younger kids? According to experts, those under 12 likely won't be able to receive the COVID vaccine until later this year or early next year.

Is the Vaccine Safe for Children?

While many eagerly await a consensus from the FDA and the CDC, some health experts say data so far indicates the vaccine is safe for younger age groups.

"It is safe," Dr. Markeita Moore, a pediatrician with Advocate Children's Hospital, said during a Facebook Live Wednesday. "Yes, we highly recommend it - us and the [American Academy of Pediatrics]."

How Effective is the Vaccine for Younger Groups?

The authorization announcement is set to come a month after Pfizer said its shot, which is the only COVID vaccine authorized in the U.S. for those age 16 and older, also provided protection for the younger population.

Pfizer in late March released preliminary results from a vaccine study of 2,260 U.S. volunteers ages 12 to 15, showing there were no cases of [COVID-19](#) among fully vaccinated adolescents compared with 18 among those given dummy shots.

"Now what's important to note is that ... there have been clinical trials that have been going on for 12- to 15-year-olds, so this has been studied in this age group," Dr. Candice Robinson, medical director for the Chicago Department of Public Health, said Tuesday. "The same way it was studied in the adults before it was authorized for use in adults, it's also been studied in our 12- to 15-year-olds as well. And what they found [is] it works for most studies. The high level overviews work very well, been very protective in that age group, and they found no serious safety or concerns about that, and so we'll get more of that data as the FDA ... makes that decision."

Do Kids Need the Vaccine When They Haven't Been Affected by the Virus as Much as Adults?

According to doctors at Advocate Children's Hospital, the answer is yes.

"We've had kids hospitalized since the beginning of the pandemic, some who have been quite ill," Moore said. "We also in June of this past year, started to see the inflammatory syndrome that we've mentioned before... and those kids can be very sick down to very young ages, down to toddler ages."

Dr. Frank Belmonte, chief medical officer at Advocate Children's Hospital, also noted that children getting vaccinated can help prevent spread among adults as well.

"Actually, in that 12 to 18 age range, there's about a 20% transmissibility," he said. "So even if they don't get, you know, really sick from the virus they can spread it to family members or to other vulnerable folks in their community."

Do Children Experience the Same Side Effects?

Kids had side effects similar to young adults, Pfizer said. The main side effects are pain, fever, chills and fatigue, particularly after the second dose. The study will continue to track participants for two years for more information about long-term protection and safety.

Robinson also noted that sore arms and similar common side effects associated with the vaccine were most common for younger populations receiving the vaccine, but said no concerns have so far been raised, though additional data is expected to be released.

"I think the side effect profiles for kids are probably some of the same things we see, you know, with vaccines with adults," she said. "The sore arms and things like that are kind of the most common side effects after vaccination and things that kids see after their vaccination with their routine vaccinations, as well, but no serious safety concerns have been identified with the use of Pfizer in this age group at this time."

Moore echoed that claim, saying side effects for the younger group will likely be similar to 16- to 25-year-olds.

"They will have the same type of side effects as the 16 through the 25 group, which is injection site pain, which is fatigue, which is headaches," he said. "So those are the most common ones... It's not permanent, it is transient for about 24 to 48 hours."

Chicago's top doctor also said preliminary information did not indicate younger groups saw more or less side effects than others.

"From the preliminary information that I've seen, they were not seeing higher side effects in kids, and they were seeing very, very good levels of protection when they look for antibodies in the blood. [It's] actually been a little better than what they'd seen in the young adults," CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said.

What is the Guidance for Parents Should the Vaccine be Recommended by Federal Officials?

"The recommendation for parents [is] the same as they get for vaccinations themselves," Robinson said. "You really want to get your kid vaccinated to make sure that they are covered and protected [to] get that most protection from that vaccine against COVID. So the recommendation will be ... the same if the FDA authorizes it."

Arwady also noted that, assuming both the FDA and CDC recommend use of the vaccine in such populations, earlier vaccinations will be beneficial for some.

"Don't wait until, you know, just prior to school," she said. "We know kids are wanting to do sports this summer and go to camp and be with friends, and we still have a lot of COVID around... When I think about being able to have kids over 12 vaccinated, we know older kids, you know, are more likely to spread COVID than the youngest kids. And so [I'm] really excited about the possibility of having a vaccine."

Is the Vaccine Safe for Kids With Seasonal and Peanut Allergies?

According to the doctors at Advocate Children's Hospital, the answer is yes.

Where Will You Be Able to Get the Vaccine for Kids Ages 12-15 If It is Approved?

At Northwestern Children's Practice in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood, pediatricians have the Pfizer vaccine ready to go in the specialized freezer it requires. Parents can schedule the shots for kids in the approved age group once the FDA and the CDC give the okay.

But the subzero storage may be a challenge for some pediatricians to offer it in-office.

"I think a lot of parents probably would feel more comfortable getting in their pediatrician's office, but whether you get it at the pediatrician or the pharmacy or health department, I think the shot is the shot at that point," Dr. Scott Goldstein, a pediatrician at Northwestern Children's Practice said.

A spokesperson for Cook County Health said administrators at its five locations offering the Pfizer vaccine will welcome children, accompanied by a parent, once the FDA and CDC give the green light. Parents can make appointments and walk-ins will also be welcome.

Chris Hoff, the Director for Community Health Resources in DuPage County, said children ages 12-15, accompanied by a parent, will be accepted at the community vaccination site at the DuPage County Fairgrounds.

"The goal will be to make sure the vaccine is widely available to a group that really should be prioritized for vaccine, especially as we look to school in the fall and reduction in transmission all over the community," Hoff said.

In a statement, Hannah Goering, spokesperson for the Lake County Health Department, wrote, "We are still working through the details on logistics and are eagerly awaiting this authorization. In addition to offering appointments (with a parent or legal guardian present) at our mass vaccination sites, we are working with area pediatricians and family medicine doctors to help get them set up to offer COVID-19 to their child patients and their families and have over 100 healthcare providers lined up so far."

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital [is now scheduling appointments](#) for ages 16 and up, and will offer appointments to age 12 to 15 once the approval happens.

A spokesperson for Advocate Children's Hospital said the hospital "will be ready immediately to begin scheduling adolescents 12-15."

"We are currently already doing ages 16-18," the spokesperson said. "Will not have to be Advocate Aurora patients—we will immunize anyone in that age group. We cannot schedule until approval, but parents will be able to go to www.aah.org to schedule, once approved."

What Can You Do If Your Children Aren't Old Enough to Get Vaccinated?

"Both Pfizer and Moderna currently have studies that are ongoing for vaccine down to six months so maybe into next year we may actually see vaccine for our people less than 12 years of age, so stay tuned for that and keep looking out," Robinson said. "But in the meantime, you know, there will still be some protective things that you will need, the children will need to continue to do because they can't get vaccinated. So still make sure they're washing their hands, wearing their masks, social distancing in the appropriate settings and following the CDC guidance for persons who are unvaccinated."

Chicago's top doctor also said that vaccinating those who are eligible around the children can also keep them protected.

"If you can get all the adults vaccinated around the kids risk really goes down a lot, " Arwady said. "And then assuming teenagers coming here too - I don't know if you've got an older brother or cousin, etc. - but like, you know, the best way to be protected is to be surrounded by a lot of people who are vaccinated themselves. And then as our case numbers go down here, right, like the risk will go lower and lower and lower."

Will There Be Exceptions for Younger Children With Certain Conditions?

According to experts, the answer is likely no.

"No exceptions," Moore said. "We have to go with the [emergency use authorization] usage."

OP-ED: Don't Miss Your Shot: Get Vaccinated Against COVID-19.

May 7, 2021

By Dr. Claudia Fegan, Chief Medical Officer, Cook County Health

<https://chicago defender.com/op-ed-dont-miss-your-shot-get-vaccinated-against-covid-19/>

COVID-19 is scary. All of sudden last year we were told there was a new virus. We had to stay home, wear masks, not see or touch each other – even our families. Everything changed, almost overnight. Our world was turned upside down. All we wanted was to get back to normal.

Now we have a chance to do that – return to normal. There is a vaccine, three in fact, that can help protect us against the virus. Experts expect COVID-19 to be around for a while, and the vaccine offers us all the best shot at returning to life as usual. As a doctor and a mother, I am urging everyone I know to get their vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccines are remarkably effective, more effective than most of the vaccines we all get against childhood diseases like mumps and measles. It is important to know that you cannot get COVID-19 from any of the vaccines. Some people do have side effects that can last a few hours or a few days, but the side effects are not as bad as getting COVID-19 and dying and they are not as bad as getting COVID-19 and giving the virus to someone you love who then dies.

Soon, we expect the FDA and CDC to approve the Pfizer vaccine for everyone age 12 and older. When that happens, I hope parents will get their kids vaccinated too. While younger people are generally less likely to experience severe COVID-19 symptoms, serious illness in kids still does happen. In addition, even if they do not feel sick, they can spread the disease to others, putting vulnerable people at-risk.

Do not put off getting your shot. The vaccine has never been more readily available. You can walk-in to any one of Cook County Health's vaccination sites Monday through Saturday to be vaccinated. It is easy and quick.

This Mother's Day weekend, honor the special women in your life by getting vaccinated to protect yourself and your family against COVID-19. There is nothing your mother wants more than for you to be healthy. Do not miss your shot. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourselves and your loved ones from the virus and to give us a chance to all be together again.



SSC to provide SHIELD COVID-19 testing in Oak Forest

South Suburban College to Provide Rapid Testing in Oak Forest Cook County Health expands walk-in service hours at SSC's vaccination site

Patrick Rush

May 10, 2021

South Suburban College (SSC) is adding a second COVID-19 testing site at its Oak Forest Center (OFC) to provide free rapid testing through the SHIELD Illinois program. The OFC-SHIELD testing site will open on May 17th with availability initially limited to two days a week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. If demand increases, dates and times will be expanded. To schedule an appointment, a SHIELD account must be created through [Portal.shieldillinois.com](https://portal.shieldillinois.com) using agency code: df5brbrj

SHIELD Illinois is a screening testing program and infrastructure that deploys the University of Illinois' innovative saliva test across the state. SSC will be providing the SHIELD test at no cost, compared to \$100 or more for a standard nasal swab test. Current notification time for the saliva test is less than 24 hours, compared to a several-day turnaround time for most available tests. Through advantages in cost, speed and accuracy, the saliva tests can increase access to testing and control spread.

Additionally, Cook County Health is further expanding its walk-in vaccination hours at South Suburban College's Main Campus Gymnasium in South Holland. Walk-in vaccinations will now be available Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. (last walk-in will be accepted at the posted closing times). No special residency, preregistration nor appointments are required. Anyone ages 16 and older (ages 16 and 17 with parent or guardian) may get vaccinated. Check ssc.edu for updates including the pending opening for ages 12-15 soon.

SSC's drive-thru testing also continues four days a week on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. No appointment is necessary for the drive-thru tents set up at the College's Main Campus northwest parking lot (not a rapid testing site).

South Suburban College's Oak Forest Center is located at 16333 South Kilbourn Avenue, Oak Forest, Illinois. The Main Campus is located at 15800 South State Street, South Holland, Illinois.



COVID Vaccine for 12-15: What to Know as FDA Authorizes Pfizer Shots for Kids

May 10, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/covid-vaccine-for-12-15-what-to-know-as-fda-authorizes-pfizer-shots-for-kids/2506655/>

Now that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has [authorized emergency use of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine in children ages 12 to 15](#) Monday, what can parents expect?

Here's a breakdown of the latest developments and what's next:

When Could Kids 12 to 15 Get the COVID Vaccine?

U.S. regulators on Monday expanded use of Pfizer's shot to those as young as 12. The two-dose vaccine was already [authorized for use](#) in people 16 and older, but the expansion will allow for children to get vaccinated ahead of the fall school year.

The FDA's decision will now be followed by a meeting of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's federal vaccine advisory committee, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (known as ACIP), to discuss whether to recommend the shot for 12- to 15-year-olds.

The ACIP has already set an emergency meeting for Wednesday. According to a previously posted agenda on the CDC's website, the committee will meet virtually beginning at 10 a.m. CT, with a vote scheduled to take place after discussion beginning at 1:45 p.m.

Pfizer isn't the only company seeking to lower the age limit for its vaccine. Results also are expected by the middle of this year from a U.S. study of Moderna's vaccine in 12-to -17-year-olds. Pfizer is currently authorized for use on people ages 16 and up, while Moderna is authorized for people 18 and older.

What about younger kids? According to experts, those under 12 likely won't be able to receive the COVID vaccine until later this year or early next year.

Both Pfizer and Moderna have started studies in the U.S. surrounding the vaccine and children ages 6 months to 11 years. Results on those studies could come sometime in the fall.

Is the Vaccine Safe for Children?

The Food and Drug Administration declared the Pfizer vaccine is safe and offers strong protection for younger teens based on testing of more than 2,000 U.S. volunteers ages 12 to 15. The study found no cases of COVID-19 among fully vaccinated adolescents compared to 18 among kids given dummy shots.

Chicago-area health experts agreed.

"It is safe," Dr. Markeita Moore, a pediatrician with Advocate Children's Hospital, said during a Facebook Live Wednesday. "Yes, we highly recommend it - us and the [American Academy of Pediatrics]."

How Effective is the Vaccine for Younger Groups?

The authorization announcement comes a month after Pfizer said its shot, which is the only COVID vaccine authorized in the U.S. for those age 16 and older, also provided protection for the younger population.

Pfizer in late March released preliminary results from a vaccine study of 2,260 U.S. volunteers ages 12 to 15, showing there were no cases of [COVID-19](#) among fully vaccinated adolescents compared with 18 among those given dummy shots.

More intriguing, researchers found the kids developed higher levels of virus-fighting antibodies than earlier studies measured in young adults.

"Now what's important to note is that ... there have been clinical trials that have been going on for 12- to 15-year-olds, so this has been studied in this age group," Dr. Candice Robinson, medical director for the Chicago Department of Public Health, said Tuesday. "The same way it was studied in the adults before it was authorized for use in adults, it's also been studied in our 12- to 15-year-olds as well. And what they found [is] it works for most studies. The high level overviews work very well, been very protective in that age group, and they found no serious safety or concerns about that."

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"The goal will be to make sure the vaccine is widely available to a group that really should be prioritized for vaccine, especially as we look to school in the fall and reduction in transmission all over the community," Hoff said.

In a statement, Hannah Goering, spokesperson for the Lake County Health Department, wrote, "We are still working through the details on logistics and are eagerly awaiting this authorization. In addition to offering appointments (with a parent or legal guardian present) at our mass vaccination sites, we are working with area pediatricians and family medicine doctors to help get them set up to offer COVID-19 to their child patients and their families and have over 100 healthcare providers lined up so far."

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Do Kids Need the Vaccine When They Haven't Been Affected by the Virus as Much as Adults?

According to doctors at Advocate Children's Hospital, the answer is yes.

"We've had kids hospitalized since the beginning of the pandemic, some who have been quite ill," Moore said. "We also in June of this past year, started to see the inflammatory syndrome that we've mentioned before... and those kids can be very sick down to very young ages, down to toddler ages."

According to new figures from the American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 infections in children are remaining stubbornly constant.

The data showed that children are now making up 22% of COVID-19 infections and they are about 1.2 to 3.1% of hospitalizations.

At least 296 children have died from COVID-19 in the U.S. alone and more than 15,000 have been hospitalized, according to a tally by the AAP.

Dr. Grace Lee, a pediatric epidemiologist at Stanford Children's Health said vaccines for children could lead to plummeting infection rates.

"Having vaccines gives you a huge layer of protection that goes above and beyond with what we can do with masking and social distancing and cohorting, etc," she said.

Dr. Frank Belmonte, chief medical officer at Advocate Children's Hospital, also noted that children getting vaccinated can help prevent spread among adults as well.

"Actually, in that 12 to 18 age range, there's about a 20% transmissibility," he said. "So even if they don't get, you know, really sick from the virus they can spread it to family members or to other vulnerable folks in their community."

Do Children Experience the Same Side Effects?

Kids had side effects similar to young adults, Pfizer said.

The younger teens received the same vaccine dosage as adults and reported the same side effects, mostly sore arms and flu-like fever, chills or aches that signal a revved-up immune system, particularly after the second dose.

Robinson also noted that sore arms and similar common side effects associated with the vaccine were most common for younger populations receiving the vaccine, but said no concerns have so far been raised/

"I think the side effect profiles for kids are probably some of the same things we see, you know, with vaccines with adults," she said. "The sore arms and things like that are kind of the most common side effects after vaccination and things that kids see after their vaccination with their routine vaccinations, as well, but no serious safety concerns have been identified with the use of Pfizer in this age group at this time."

Moore echoed that claim, saying side effects for the younger group will likely be similar to 16- to 25-year-olds.

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Chicago's top doctor also said preliminary information did not indicate younger groups saw more or less side effects than others.

"From the preliminary information that I've seen, they were not seeing higher side effects in kids, and they were seeing very, very good levels of protection when they look for antibodies in the blood. [It's] actually been a little better than what they'd seen in the young adults," CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said.

Will the Vaccine Be Required in Schools in Illinois?

According to Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker no decisions have been made so far.

"We have time to make some decisions about all that," Pritzker said.

Already a number of universities in Illinois are requiring vaccinations for students to attend during the fall, including Loyola, DePaul and Columbia College.

But no guidance has been given surrounding public or private elementary, middle or high schools around the state.

"There are other states where they're going to require students to be vaccinated before they come back to campus in the fall. You know, that's something we've looked at," Pritzker said. "I would like for, you know, we'll see what percent of the population at schools this spring show up to get vaccinated. And over the summer, and you know, we'll have to make some decisions about that as well."

In Chicago, the city's top doctor said while it may be a possibility, there are no guidelines in place so far.

"It's going to be a big conversation," Arwady said. "I think at schools really across the country having a fully approved vaccine including for kids I think is one of the first steps in that conversation. But my goal really always is not to mandate, but instead to encourage educate and help people understand that if they get vaccinated, their child gets vaccinated, that's the most important thing to do."

What is the Guidance for Parents Should the Vaccine be Recommended by Federal Officials?

"The recommendation for parents [is] the same as they get for vaccinations themselves," Robinson said. "You really want to get your kid vaccinated to make sure that they are covered and protected [to] get that most protection from that vaccine against COVID. So the recommendation will be ... the same if the FDA authorizes it."

Arwady also noted that, assuming both the FDA and CDC recommend use of the vaccine in such populations, earlier vaccinations will be beneficial for some.

"Don't wait until, you know, just prior to school," she said. "We know kids are wanting to do sports this summer and go to camp and be with friends, and we still have a lot of COVID around... When I think about being able to have kids over 12 vaccinated, we know older kids, you know, are more likely to spread COVID than the youngest kids. And so [I'm] really excited about the possibility of having a vaccine."

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Chicago's top doctor also said that vaccinating those who are eligible around the children can also keep them protected.

"If you can get all the adults vaccinated around the kids risk really goes down a lot," Arwady said. "And then assuming teenagers coming here too - I don't know if you've got an older brother or cousin, etc. - but like, you know, the best way to be protected is to be surrounded by a lot of people who are vaccinated themselves. And then as our case numbers go down here, right, like the risk will go lower and lower and lower."

Will There Be Exceptions for Younger Children With Certain Conditions?

According to experts, the answer is likely no.

"No exceptions," Moore said. "We have to go with the [emergency use authorization] usage."



When and Where You Can Get COVID Vaccines for Kids Ages 12-15

U.S. regulators expanded use of Pfizer's shot to those as young as 12

May 10, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/when-and-where-to-get-covid-vaccines-for-kids-ages-12-15/2506686/>

Following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's [emergency use authorization of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine in children ages 12 to 15](#) Monday, there will likely be a rush of parents looking to get their children vaccinated for summer and before the fall school year begins.

U.S. regulators on Monday expanded use of Pfizer's shot to those as young as 12. The two-dose vaccine was already [authorized for use](#) in people 16 and older.

The FDA's decision doesn't mean vaccinations can begin right away, however.

The FDA's ruling will now be followed by a meeting of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's federal vaccine advisory committee, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (known as ACIP), to discuss whether to recommend the shot for 12- to 15-year-olds.

The ACIP has already set an emergency meeting for Wednesday. According to a previously posted agenda on the CDC's website, the committee will meet virtually beginning at 10 a.m. CT, with a vote scheduled to take place after discussion beginning at 1:45 p.m.

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In a statement, Hannah Goering, spokesperson for the Lake County Health Department, said last week the department is "still working through the details on logistics and are eagerly awaiting this authorization."

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Pfizer isn't the only company seeking to lower the age limit for its vaccine. Results also are expected by the middle of this year from a U.S. study of Moderna's vaccine in 12-to -17-year-olds. Pfizer is currently authorized for use on people ages 16 and up, while Moderna is authorized for people 18 and older.

What about younger kids? According to experts, those under 12 likely won't be able to receive the COVID vaccine until later this year or early next year.

Both Pfizer and Moderna have started studies in the U.S. surrounding the vaccine and children ages 6 months to 11 years. Results on those studies could come sometime in the fall.



Five Mass Vaccination Sites To Extend Hours Ahead Of Cook County Health's Decision To Offer Pfizer Vaccine To Children

May 11, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/five-mass-vaccination-sites-toextend-103625607.html>

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Monday authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 12 to 15. Cook County Health said it will make a public announcement about when it expects to offer the Pfizer vaccine to children ages 12 to 15. The CDC still must provide authorization.

Video Transcript

RYAN BAKER: Five mass vaccination sites are preparing for the CDC to approve the Pfizer vaccine for children 12 to 15 years old. Now, the preps come after yesterday's FDA decision to sign off on COVID shots for younger kids. CBS 2's Mugo Odigwe is live with a look at how those vaccination sites in our area are getting ready. Mugo.

MUGO ODIGWE: Yeah. Good morning, Ryan. So the big change here is longer hours. For example this mass vaccination site here in Forest Park used to open at 8:30 in the morning, and close at 5:00 PM. But starting today, it will open at 8:00 AM and close at 8:00 PM.

All of this is in anticipation of a rush for shots as the Centers for Disease Control discusses final approval of the Pfizer vaccine for children 12 to 15 years old. Now, this will be the first vaccine available for that age group. And it's needed, because according to the CDC, the US has seen about a million and a half cases in kids between 11 and 17.

So the agency meets tomorrow and, if approved, kids could begin getting their shots the same day. That's why some mass vaccination sites in Cook County are extending their hours. And those sites are in Matteson, Triton College in River Grove, South Suburban College in South Holland, Des Plaines, and Forest Park, which is where we are this morning.

So this change in hours, again, it begins today. Mass vaccination sites, those five that we mentioned, will now be open from 8:00 AM in the morning to 8:00 PM at night. We're live in Forest Park. Mugo Odigwe, CBS 2 News.



Five Mass Vaccination Sites To Extend Hours Ahead Of Cook County Health's Decision To Offer Pfizer Vaccine To Children

May 11, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/video/5572896-five-mass-vaccination-sites-toextend-hours-ahead-of-cook-county-healths-decision-to-offer-pfizer-vaccine-to-children/>





FDA Approves Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine For Children Ages 12 To 15

May 11, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/05/11/fda-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-ages-12-to-15/>

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Monday authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 12 to 15.

“The FDA’s expansion of the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to include adolescents 12 through 15 years of age is a significant step in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic,” Acting FDA Commissioner Dr. Janet Woodcock said in a news release. “Today’s action allows for a younger population to be protected from COVID-19, bringing us closer to returning to a sense of normalcy and to ending the pandemic. Parents and guardians can rest assured that the agency undertook a rigorous and thorough review of all available data, as we have with all of our COVID-19 vaccine emergency use authorizations.”

From March 1 through April 30, about 1.5 million COVID-19 cases were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in young people between the ages of 11 and 17. Children and adolescents usually have milder cases of COVID-19 than adults, the FDA noted.

The FDA has determined the Pfizer vaccine has met the statutory criteria to amend the emergency use authorization for younger ages – and that the benefits outweigh the risks for everyone age 12 or older.

Cook County Health said it will make a public announcement about when it expects to offer the Pfizer vaccine to children ages 12 to 15. The CDC still must provide authorization.

That offering for kids could come later this week. Five mass-vaccination sites in Cook County are already preparing for an anticipated rush for shots by expanding hours this week.

The sites are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays. No appointments are necessary.

The following are the mass vaccination sites that will soon provide vaccines for children 12 to 15:

- Matteson – 4647 Promenade Way
- River Grove – Triton College, 2000 5th Ave.
- South Holland – South Suburban College, 15800 State St.
- Des Plaines – 1155 E. Oakton St.
- Forest Park – 7630 W. Roosevelt Rd.

[Reported COVID-19 cases involving young people ages 12 to 17](#) have been stable for approximately the past month in Illinois, but hovering at their highest level since late January. There were a total of 2,068 cases for that age range in Illinois reported for the week ending May 1, a total of 2,069 for the week ending April 24, and 2,156 for the week ending April 17.

If you are still looking to get a vaccine, the United Center has open appointments. Appointments are available through May 10 and the facility is back to offering the [Johnson & Johnson vaccine](#).

Appointments can be made via [Zocdoc](#), or through the city’s COVID Help Line at (312) 746-4835.



Chicago Mass Vaccination Sites To Begin Offering Pfizer Vaccine For Children Age 12 To 15 On Thursday

May 11, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/05/11/pfizer-vaccine-children-12-15-chicago-department-of-public-health-mass-vaccination-sites/>

With the CDC expected to give final approval for use of Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine in kids age 12 and up on Wednesday, the Chicago Department of Public Health announced it will make the shots available to children 12 and older at its mass vaccination sites on Thursday.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Monday [authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 12 to 15](#), and the CDC is expected to grant full approval on Wednesday. The Pfizer vaccine is already authorized for anyone age 16 and older.

Seven city-operated mass vaccination sites will begin offering the Pfizer vaccine to anyone in that age group starting Thursday, although children under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. The following Chicago mass vaccination sites will offer the Pfizer vaccine to youth age 12 and up:

SITE	ADDRESS	DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION	ELIGIBILITY
A.A.C.C. @ Gallagher Way Wrigley Field*	1119 W. Waveland	Tuesday-Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Anyone 12+
Apostolic Faith Church	3823 S. Indiana	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday: 9am – 2pm	Anyone 12+
Chicago State University Walk-Up	9501 South King Drive (Emil and Patricia A. Jones Convocation Center)	Mon-Friday: Noon – 6pm Saturday: 9am-3pm	Anyone 12+
United Center drive-thru	1724 W. Madison	7-days/week: 9:00am – 7:00pm	Anyone 12+
Richard J. Daley College	7500 S. Pulaski	Tuesday-Friday: Noon-6pm Saturday: 9am-3pm	Anyone 12+
Wilbur Wright College	4300 N. Narragansett	Wednesday and Friday: Noon-6pm Saturday: 9am-3pm	Anyone 12+
Loretto Hospital	645 S. Central	Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays: 12pm-6pm Saturdays: 9am-3pm	Anyone 12+

*Vaccination site at American Airlines Conference Center at Gallagher Way is operated by Advocate Aurora.

Walk-ins will be accepted, although appointments can be booked online through www.zocdoc.com/vaccine or by calling 312-746-4835.

The city said many pharmacies also offer Pfizer vaccines for children.

Cook County Health said it will make a public announcement about when it expects to offer the Pfizer vaccine to children ages 12 to 15.

That offering for kids could come later this week. Five mass-vaccination sites in Cook County are already preparing for an anticipated rush for shots by expanding hours this week.

The sites are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays. No appointments are necessary.

The following are the mass vaccination sites that will soon provide vaccines for children 12 to 15:

- Matteson – 4647 Promenade Way
- River Grove – Triton College, 2000 5th Ave.
- South Holland – South Suburban College, 15800 State St.
- Des Plaines – 1155 E. Oakton St.
- Forest Park – 7630 W. Roosevelt Rd.



COVID Vaccine for 12-15: Cook County to Open Vaccination Sites to Kids This Week

May 11, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/covid-vaccine-for-12-15-cook-county-to-open-vaccination-sites-to-kids-this-week/2507319/>

Cook County plans to open its mass vaccination sites to children ages 12 to 15 later this week after the Pfizer vaccine receives its anticipated approval from federal regulators to expand to kids in that age group.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Monday [authorized emergency use of Pfizer's vaccine in children](#) ages 12 to 15. The FDA's decision will now be followed by a meeting of the CDC's federal vaccine advisory committee, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (known as ACIP), on Wednesday to discuss whether to recommend the shot for that age group.

Cook County Health said Tuesday that the ACIP is "expected to issue a similar approval after its meeting."

"Cook County Health is looking forward to welcoming newly-eligible adolescents age 12-15 for vaccination later this week," the county said.

The county noted that parents will be able to make [appointments for their children ages 12 to 15 online](#) once CDC approval has been granted, adding that the county's mass vaccination sites will continue to accept walk-ins.

"As a physician and a parent of a 13-year-old, I am thrilled that the Pfizer vaccine will be approved for children age 12 to 15," Cook County Health's COVID-19 vaccine coordinator Dr. Gregory Huhn said in a statement.

"We are now seeing the highest rates of COVID-19 infections in younger people," Huhn continued. "If we want kids to return to school, sports and friends as safely as possible, they should be vaccinated. It is our best chance at giving them some sense of normalcy back."

Chicago also announced Tuesday that its vaccination sites will open to children ages 12 to 15 beginning Thursday, with the option to book appointments now.

Appointments can be booked for Chicago sites through www.zocdoc.com/vaccine or by calling the city's call center at 312.746.4835. Chicago officials said all vaccine sites will also accept walk-ins for ages 12 to 15 beginning Thursday.

A parent or guardian must accompany any minor under age 18, the city said, and unvaccinated parents and guardians will be encouraged to receive a vaccine as well.

"Like adults, all youth age 12 and older are encouraged to get the vaccine," CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said in a statement. "Current data show that the vaccine is safe and effective in children, and it not only protects our kids, but also their families and our communities."

"In Chicago, communities with the lowest vaccination rates continue to have high case counts and rates of hospitalization and death—even in teens and young adults," she continued. "Help us increase vaccine uptake and get past COVID by bringing your whole family to get vaccinated together."

Other vaccination sites and providers in the Chicago area are also already scheduling appointments for children ahead of the CDC's meeting, while others are not scheduling yet but preparing to as soon as it's approved.



COVID-19 In Illinois: More Than 10 Million Vaccine Doses Administered, More Than 4.5 Million People Fully Vaccinated

May 11, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/05/11/covid-19-in-illinois-more-than-10-million-vaccine-doses-administered-more-than-4-5-million-people-fully-vaccinated/>

Illinois has reached a new milestone in the fight against COVID-19, as more than 10 million vaccine doses have been administered statewide so far, and more than 4.5 million people have been fully vaccinated, even as the average number of shots given out per day continues to lag behind the levels seen one month ago.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 58,709 doses of coronavirus vaccines were administered statewide on Monday, bringing the total number of shots given out so far in Illinois to 10,037,624. A total of 4,552,454 people in Illinois have been fully vaccinated as of Monday night, accounting for 35.73% of the population.

The state is averaging 83,887 doses administered per day over the past week, down 37% from one month ago. That average fell as low as 65,570 per day just four days ago.

The CDC is expected to give final approval to use of the Pfizer vaccine in children ages 12 to 15 on Wednesday.

In Chicago, [seven city-operated mass vaccination sites will start offering the Pfizer vaccine to kids ages 12 to 15 starting Thursday](#). Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Cook County Health said parents can already register children ages 12-15 for a vaccine at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov to get the latest updates and will be able to make appointments for those children online once final CDC approval has been granted. Those appointments will be available later this week.

Five [mass-vaccination sites in Cook County are already preparing for an anticipated rush for shots](#) by expanding hours this week. The sites are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays. No appointments are necessary.

Meantime, IDPH reported 1,562 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday, as well as 26 more deaths. Since the start of the pandemic, Illinois has reported a total of 1,357,953 cases, including 22,261 deaths.

Illinois is averaging 2,082 new cases per day so far this month, down 35% from the same time in April.

The statewide seven-day average case positivity rate stands at 2.8%, tied for the lowest it's been since March 24.

As of Monday night, a total of 1,930 coronavirus patients were hospitalized in Illinois, including 489 in the ICU and 261 on ventilators. Illinois is averaging 1,970 hospitalizations per day so far this month, up 19% from one month ago, but down 7% from mid-April.

The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from May 4-10, 2021 is 2.8%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from May 4-10, 2021 is 3.3%.

A total of 10,037,624 vaccines have been administered in Illinois as of last midnight. The seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is 83,887 doses. Yesterday, 58,709 doses were reported administered in Illinois.

*All data are provisional and will change. In order to rapidly report COVID-19 information to the public, data are being reported in real-time. Information is constantly being entered into an electronic system and the number of cases and deaths can change as additional information is gathered. For health questions about COVID-19, call the hotline at 1-800-889-3931 or email dph.sick@illinois.gov.



Where To Get Pfizer COVID-19 Shot For Children 12-15: Doctors Say Vaccinating Children Key To Helping End Pandemic

Chris Tye
May 11, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/05/11/pfizer-vaccine-children-cdc-approval-wednesday-doctors-urge-child-vaccinations/>

As a CDC panel prepares to vote Wednesday on final approval of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 12 to 15, some of the Chicago area's top doctors gathered on Tuesday to help educate parents why it's safe to get your kids vaccinated.

"Getting your child a COVID-19 vaccine is critical to his or her wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of our community," said Dr. Frank Belmonte, chief medical officer for Advocate Children's Hospital.

Belmonte and other doctors say children play a huge role in helping to end the pandemic.

The Pfizer vaccine would be the first vaccine available for kids 12 to 15 years old, and it's needed, because according to the CDC, the U.S. has seen about a 1.5 million coronavirus cases in kids between 11 and 17.

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will meet Wednesday to vote on full approval of the Pfizer vaccine for kids ages 12 to 15.

Some children could begin getting their shots the same day.

This is crucial, because doctors say even though children have not had as many complications from COVID-19, many have gotten critically ill from the virus.

"When it comes to children and teens, the state of Illinois has ranked second in the nation in the number of overall diagnosed pediatric COVID-19 cases," Belmonte said.

Then there are the possible complications.

"It is early to predict, but some long-term complications are still possible, and are being studied, which is why it's important to protect your child against this disease," Belmonte said.

Vaccination sites in our area are getting ready. [Parents can now make an appointment via Zocdoc.](#) (More information about walk in sites below.)

In Chicago, [seven city-operated mass vaccination sites will start offering the Pfizer vaccine to kids ages 12 to 15 starting Thursday.](#) Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

SITE	ADDRESS	DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION	ELIGIBILITY
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A.A.C.C. @ Gallagher Way Wrigley Field*	1119 W. Waveland	Tuesday-Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Anyone 12+
Apostolic Faith Church	3823 S. Indiana	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday: 9am – 2pm	Anyone 12+
Chicago State University Walk-Up	9501 South King Drive (Emil and Patricia A. Jones Convocation Center)	Mon-Friday: Noon – 6pm Saturday: 9am-3pm	Anyone 12+
United Center drive-thru	1724 W. Madison	7-days/week: 9:00am – 7:00pm	Anyone 12+
Richard J. Daley College	7500 S. Pulaski	Tuesday-Friday: Noon-6pm Saturday: 9am-3pm	Anyone 12+
Wilbur Wright College	4300 N. Narragansett	Wednesday and Friday: Noon-6pm Saturday: 9am-3pm	Anyone 12+
Loretto Hospital	645 S. Central	Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays: 12pm-6pm Saturdays: 9am-3pm	Anyone 12+

*Vaccination site at American Airlines Conference Center at Gallagher Way is operated by Advocate Aurora.

Cook County Health said parents can already register children ages 12-15 for a vaccine at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov to get the latest updates and will be able to make appointments for those children online once final CDC approval has been granted. Those appointments will be available later this week.

“As a physician and a parent of a 13-year-old, I am thrilled that the Pfizer vaccine will be approved for children age 12 to 15,” said Dr. Gregory Huhn, infectious disease physician and Cook County Health’s COVID-19 vaccine coordinator. “We are now seeing the highest rates of COVID-19 infections in younger people. If we want kids to return to school, sports and friends as safely as possible, they should be vaccinated. It is our best chance at giving them some sense of normalcy back.”

Five mass-vaccination sites in Cook County are already preparing for an anticipated rush for shots by expanding hours this week.

The sites are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays. No appointments are necessary.

The following are the mass vaccination sites that will soon provide vaccines for children 12 to 15:

- Matteson – 4647 Promenade Way
- River Grove – Triton College, 2000 5th Ave.
- South Holland – South Suburban College, 15800 State St.
- Des Plaines – 1155 E. Oakton St.
- Forest Park – 7630 W. Roosevelt Rd.



Kids ages 12 to 15 can get the Pfizer vaccine in Chicago, suburbs this week

The CDC is expected to give final approval for use of the two-dose vaccine in youth on Wednesday, though appointments can be made in advance now.

A.D. Quig

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/kids-ages-12-15-can-get-pfizer-vaccine-chicago-suburbs-week>

Children ages 12 to 15 can get the Pfizer vaccine at city- and county-run vaccination sites later this week, officials said today.

The announcement comes a day after FDA granted emergency-use authorization of the shots for the 12 to 15 age group. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is expected to grant full approval for the shot on Wednesday. [Click here for a how-to on signing up kids through ZocDoc.](#)

Seven Chicago-run sites will offer the two-dose shot to children, and appointments can be made immediately, according to a statement from the city.

Fifty-eight percent of Chicagoans over 18 have received at least one dose of the vaccine, according to the Chicago Department of Public Health, and 43 percent are fully vaccinated. Just under 35 percent of the city's population is fully vaccinated. Expanding vaccine access to that younger age group is expected to accelerate the immunization campaign, as public health officials seek to curb fast-spreading variants and open schools. CPS CEO Janice Jackson has said she wants all children attending school in person in the fall. *See the latest COVID figures for the city and state in the charts below.*

Cook County Health is also welcoming 12-to-15-year-olds later this week. Parents can register their children at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov and will be able to make appointments for their children online once CDC approval has been granted, Cook County Health said in a release. CCH mass vaccination sites will continue to accept walk-ins.

"As a physician and a parent of a 13-year-old, I am thrilled that the Pfizer vaccine will be approved for children age 12 to 15," Dr. Gregory Huhn, infectious disease physician and Cook County Health's COVID-19 vaccine coordinator, said in the statement. "We are now seeing the highest rates of COVID-19 infections in younger people. If we want kids to return to school, sports and friends as safely as possible, they should be vaccinated. It is our best chance at giving them some sense of normalcy back."

While COVID cases in children are normally more mild, they can still spread the virus. Public health officials have pointed to a growing proportion of U.S. COVID cases among youth as more adults get vaccinated.

"We've had kids hospitalized since the beginning of the pandemic, some who've been quite ill," Dr. Frank Belmonte, chief medical officer at Advocate Children's Hospital, said during a recent town hall before the FDA approval. And even if kids don't get sick, they can spread the virus to family and other community members, he added.

Since Pfizer currently is the only shot that will be authorized for individuals age 12 to 17, Advocate and other hospitals are putting "safeguards in place" to ensure kids have access to the vaccine, Belmonte said.

Younger kids are expected to have the same temporary side effects from the shot as the 16 to 25 age group, including injection site pain, headaches and fatigue, Dr. Markeita Moore, a pediatrician at Advocate, said during the town hall.

City-operated vaccine site appointments for Thursday can be booked now through the City's call center at 312-746-4835 or through [Zocdoc](#). All vaccine sites will accept youth walk-ins for 12-to-15-year-olds, but a parent or guardian must accompany anyone under 18. Pfizer shots are also available at many pharmacies. City-run sites with Pfizer doses include:

- American Airlines Conference Center at Wrigley Field (1119 W. Waveland)
- Apostolic Faith Church (3823 S. Indiana)
- Chicago State University Walk-Up (9501 S. King)
- United Center Drive-Thru (1724 W. Madison)
- Richard J. Daley College (7500 S. Pulaski)
- Wilbur Wright College (4300 N. Narragansett)
- Loretto Hospital (645 S. Central)

CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady encouraged families to go get their shots together.

"Current data show that the vaccine is safe and effective in children, and it not only protects our kids, but also their families and our communities," she said in a statement, "In Chicago, communities with the lowest vaccination rates continue to have high case counts and rates of hospitalization and death—even in teens and young adults," she said in a release. "Help us increase vaccine uptake and get past COVID by bringing your whole family to get vaccinated together."

Bloomberg and Crain's reporter Stephanie Goldberg contributed.



COVID Vaccine for 12-15: Kids Can Get Vaccinated at Chicago Sites Starting Thursday, City Says

May 11, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/covid-vaccine-for-12-15-kids-can-get-vaccinated-at-chicago-sites-starting-thursday-city-says/2507136/>

Chicago's COVID-19 vaccination sites will open to children ages 12 to 15 beginning Thursday, with the option to book appointments now, the city has announced.

All city-operated vaccination sites offering the two-dose Pfizer vaccine will open to children ages 12 to 15 on Thursday, the Chicago Department of Public Health said in a statement Tuesday, one day after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration [authorized emergency use of Pfizer's vaccine in children](#) in that age group.

The FDA's decision does not mean shots are available for kids yet, with the vaccine's expanded use on children still awaiting a recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Still, CDPH said appointments can be booked now for city-run sites in anticipation that federal regulators will allow the vaccine for children by Thursday, noting that the CDC "is expected to grant full approval on Wednesday."

The Chicago sites that will offer the Pfizer vaccine to children, as well as their locations and hours, include:

A.A.C.C. @ Gallagher Way Wrigley Field, located at 1119 W. Waveland

8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday

Apostolic Faith Church, located at 3823 S. Indiana

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday

Chicago State University Walk-Up, located at 9501 South King Drive (Emil and Patricia A. Jones Convocation Center)

Noon-6 p.m. Monday-Friday; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday

United Center Drive-Thru, located at 1724 W. Madison

9 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day

Richard J. Daley College, located at 7500 S. Pulaski

Noon-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday

Wilbur Wright College, located at 4300 N. Narragansett

Noon-6 p.m. Wednesday and Friday; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday

Loretto Hospital, located at 645 S. Central

Noon-6 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday

Appointments can be booked for Chicago sites through www.zocdoc.com/vaccine or by calling the city's call center at 312.746.4835. Chicago officials said all vaccine sites will also accept walk-ins for ages 12 to 15 beginning Thursday.

A parent or guardian must accompany any minor under age 18, the city said, and unvaccinated parents and guardians will be encouraged to receive a vaccine as well.

"Like adults, all youth age 12 and older are encouraged to get the vaccine," CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said in a statement. "Current data show that the vaccine is safe and effective in children, and it not only protects our kids, but also their families and our communities."

"In Chicago, communities with the lowest vaccination rates continue to have high case counts and rates of hospitalization and death—even in teens and young adults," she continued. "Help us increase vaccine uptake and get past COVID by bringing your whole family to get vaccinated together."

The FDA's decision on Monday will now be followed by a meeting of the CDC's federal vaccine advisory committee, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (known as ACIP), to discuss whether to recommend the shot for 12- to 15-year-olds.

The ACIP has already set an emergency meeting for Wednesday. According to a previously posted agenda on the CDC's website, the committee will meet virtually beginning at 10 a.m. CT, with a vote scheduled to take place after discussion beginning at 1:45 p.m.

Other vaccination sites and providers in the Chicago area are also already scheduling appointments for children ahead of the CDC's meeting, while others are not scheduling yet but preparing to as soon as it's approved.

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital [is now scheduling appointments](#) for ages 16 and up, and will offer appointments to age 12 to 15 once approval happens.

A spokesperson for Cook County Health said administrators at its five locations offering the Pfizer vaccine will welcome children, accompanied by a parent, once both the FDA and CDC give the green light. Parents can make appointments and walk-ins will also be welcome.

Chris Hoff, the Director for Community Health Resources in DuPage County, said children ages 12-15, accompanied by a parent, will also be accepted at the community vaccination site at the DuPage County Fairgrounds.

"The goal will be to make sure the vaccine is widely available to a group that really should be prioritized for vaccine, especially as we look to school in the fall and reduction in transmission all over the community," Hoff said.

In a statement, Hannah Goering, spokesperson for the Lake County Health Department, said last week the department is "still working through the details on logistics and are eagerly awaiting this authorization."

"In addition to offering appointments (with a parent or legal guardian present) at our mass vaccination sites, we are working with area pediatricians and family medicine doctors to help get them set up to offer COVID-19 to their child patients and their families and have over 100 healthcare providers lined up so far," Goering wrote.

A spokesperson for Advocate Children's Hospital said the hospital "will be ready immediately to begin scheduling adolescents 12-15."

"We are currently already doing ages 16-18," the spokesperson said. "Will not have to be Advocate Aurora patients—we will immunize anyone in that age group. We cannot schedule until approval, but parents will be able to go to www.aah.org to schedule, once approved."

Chicago Tribune

COVID-19 vaccines for kids 12 to 15 begin at Chicago city-run sites Thursday; no appointment needed

Karen Ann Cullotta and Alice Yin

May 11, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-covid-vaccines-12-and-up-chicago-20210511-uxi6bnjzdfhqvqagcctr5apruy-story.html>

Chicago's city-operated COVID-19 vaccine sites will begin offering the Pfizer vaccine to kids 12 to 15 starting Thursday, Chicago public health officials said Tuesday while touting the two-dose shot as the strongest guarantee those children can safely celebrate the summer after a trying year of coronavirus-related closures.

The expansion of eligibility to younger kids was prompted by a recent Food and Drug Administration emergency use authorization in anticipation of full approval Wednesday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said Tuesday. The vaccines will be available at all city sites, which already offer the Pfizer shots and will accept walk-ins for those 12 and older starting Thursday.

Arwady said although the city in recent weeks has met a new challenge of having more vaccine supply than demand among residents, she hopes the new eligibility will spark heavy interest among parents of younger children — a critical demographic for achieving herd immunity, public health experts have said. It also will serve as a ticket for a fun summer for children, who have missed out on a typical year amid COVID-19 gathering limitations, Arwady said.

"I strongly encourage all parents to really get their kids vaccinated," Arwady said during a Tuesday news conference. "We're bringing back a lot of the things that people are excited about this summer: the pools are going to be open, the camps and the parks and the beaches, children are going to be gathering, and this is by far the safest way to help protect your kid and your family."

At the city-run sites, a parent or guardian must accompany any minor younger than 18 and sign a form attesting their approval, officials said. Parents and guardians who are not vaccinated will be encouraged to receive a shot as well. The parent will accompany the child throughout the process, and nurses will make a "special effort" to answer their questions about the shot, Arwady said.

A city news release said appointments for Thursday can now be booked through the city's call center at 312-746-4835 or at www.zocdoc.com/vaccine, though Arwady on Tuesday morning acknowledged that Zocdoc was experiencing some hiccups earlier in the day.

In addition to the city-operated vaccination sites, many local pharmacies also will begin offering the Pfizer vaccine Thursday to those 12 and older, Arwady said. And Chicago Public Schools will partner with the public health department, particularly on Saturdays, to bring the mobile COVID-19 Chicago Transit Authority vaccination bus to high schools across the city, Arwady said.

The COVID-19 vaccines are offered free of charge, and no insurance or ID is required.

Unlike previously when a new group has become eligible for the vaccine, Arwady said she doesn't expect children to be prioritized by risk, age or other factors because there are enough doses to go around for all who are 12 and older. But she still suggested parents opt for registering their children in advance versus walk-ins for a smoother process.

When asked what the future holds for children being mandated to get the COVID-19 vaccine, as is the case for other immunizations in public schools, Arwady said that doesn't appear likely in the near future. But she didn't rule it out.

"At this point, of course, our focus is just on getting started and making sure that vaccine is very widely available," Arwady said. "There are certainly conversations that are happening across the country, as you know there's a history of having childhood vaccinations broadly required for school, although there are exemptions that come along with that. I think the COVID-19 vaccine is going to be part of that same conversation."

All coronavirus vaccines in the U.S. remain under emergency authorization and have not been mandated for Chicago residents, although private employers are free to impose their own requirements.

Cook County Health will follow suit on vaccinating 12- to 15-year-olds "later this week" at its mass vaccination sites, the agency said in a Tuesday statement, although it didn't elaborate on a specific start day. Parents can sign up for the latest update on appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov, but walk-ins also will be allowed.

Chicago sites accepting those 12 and older are:

- American Airlines Conference Center at Gallagher Way in Wrigley Field, 1119 W. Waveland Ave.; 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday (operated by Advocate Aurora).
- Apostolic Faith Church, 3823 S. Indiana Ave.; 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday.
- Chicago State University walk-up; Emil and Patricia A. Jones Convocation Center, 9501 S. King Drive; noon-6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday.
- United Center drive-thru, 1724 W. Madison St.; 9 a.m.-7 p.m. daily.
- Richard J. Daley College, 7500 S. Pulaski Road, noon-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday.
- Wilbur Wright College, 4300 N. Narragansett Ave.; noon-6 p.m. Wednesday and Friday.
- Loretto Hospital, 645 S. Central Ave.; noon-6 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday.

Three large health systems in the Chicago area also [hope to begin vaccinating children](#) ages 12 to 15 Thursday, though it may take some time before the shots will be available at most regular pediatricians' offices.

Physicians from Advocate Aurora Health, NorthShore University HealthSystem and University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children's Hospital said they plan to begin inoculating younger children through existing vaccination clinics. Working together through the Chicagoland Children's Health Alliance, the three health systems will reach out to patients to invite them for vaccinations, but children do not need to be patients to get the shots.

Also on Tuesday, Arwady and Malcolm X College President David Sanders rolled out a free "Vaccine Ambassador" course for people interested in learning the history of vaccine hesitancy and how to approach peers and loved ones about why it's important to get the shot. People can sign up at www.ccc.edu/vaccineambassador for the free two-hour course, in English or Spanish, and will receive a certificate upon completion, officials said.

About 650 of Chicago's contact tracers will also enroll in the program, but there is capacity for thousands of other residents to take the course, Sanders said.

"People are more likely to listen to their friends and neighbors, and that is why we developed this local ambassador program and why it is so important," he said.



Where You Can Get COVID Vaccines for Kids Ages 12-15 in the Chicago Area

A number of health departments across the Chicago area have announced plans to begin vaccines as early as Thursday

May 11, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/where-you-can-get-covid-vaccines-for-kids-ages-12-15-in-the-chicago-area/2507331/>

Following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's [emergency use authorization of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine in children ages 12 to 15](#) Monday, parents are searching for when and where they can get doses for their children in the Chicago area.

A number of health departments across the Chicago area have announced plans to begin vaccines as early as Thursday, pending a recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

U.S. regulators on Monday expanded use of Pfizer's shot to those as young as 12. The two-dose vaccine was already [authorized for use](#) in people 16 and older. But the FDA's decision doesn't mean vaccinations can begin right away.

The FDA's ruling will now be followed by a meeting of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's federal vaccine advisory committee, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (known as ACIP), to discuss whether to recommend the shot for 12- to 15-year-olds. The ACIP has already set an emergency meeting for Wednesday.

Chicago

Chicago's Department of Public Health announced Tuesday that COVID-19 vaccination sites will open to children ages 12 to 15 beginning Thursday, with the option to book appointments now in anticipation of the CDC's recommendation.

The city said the CDC "is expected to grant full approval on Wednesday."

A full list of Chicago sites can be found [here](#).

Cook County

Cook County Health said Tuesday that the ACIP is "expected to issue a similar approval after its meeting."

"Cook County Health is looking forward to welcoming newly-eligible adolescents age 12-15 for vaccination later this week," the county said.

The county noted that parents will be able to make [appointments for their children ages 12 to 15 online](#) once CDC approval has been granted, adding that the county's mass vaccination sites will continue to accept walk-ins.

Lake County

The Lake County Health Department announced plans to open COVID-19 vaccinations to children ages 12 to 15 years old beginning Thursday, "following the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)."

Parents and legal guardians can register their children on the Lake County [AllVax Portal](#) for appointments at the Lake County Fairgrounds in Grayslake or Regional Vaccination Site at 102 W. Water Street, Waukegan, health officials said.

Appointments for 12 to 15-year-olds will open in the portal within 24 hours of the ACIP vote.

Kane County

Beginning Thursday, all Kane County Health Department COVID-19 vaccination sites offering Pfizer vaccine will open to those ages 12 and up.

“Families are encouraged to receive their vaccines together so that all members are protected,” Kathy Fossier, interim executive director at the Kane County Health Department, said in a statement.

The sites will be open for walk-ins, but a parent or guardian should accompany youth under age 18. If a parent or guardian is unable to attend, they can sign a consent form and allow another adult to accompany a minor. The consent form can be found online at [KaneHealth.com](https://www.kanehealth.com) and at [KaneVax.org](https://www.kanevax.org).

DuPage County

Chris Hoff, the Director for Community Health Resources in DuPage County, said last week that children ages 12-15, accompanied by a parent, will also be accepted at the community vaccination site at the DuPage County Fairgrounds.

“The goal will be to make sure the vaccine is widely available to a group that really should be prioritized for vaccine, especially as we look to school in the fall and reduction in transmission all over the community,” Hoff said.

Chicago-Area Hospitals

At Northwestern Children’s Practice in Chicago’s Gold Coast neighborhood, pediatricians have already said they had the Pfizer vaccine ready to go in the specialized freezer it requires. Parents can schedule the shots for kids in the approved age group once the FDA and the CDC give the okay.

But the subzero storage may be a challenge for some pediatricians to offer it in-office.

“I think a lot of parents probably would feel more comfortable getting in their pediatrician's office, but whether you get it at the pediatrician or the pharmacy or health department, I think the shot is the shot at that point,” Dr. Scott Goldstein, a pediatrician at Northwestern Children’s Practice said.

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital [is now scheduling appointments](#) for ages 16 and up, and will offer appointments to age 12 to 15 once approval happens.

A spokesperson for Advocate Children’s Hospital said the hospital "will be ready immediately to begin scheduling adolescents 12-15."

"We are currently already doing ages 16-18," the spokesperson said. "Will not have to be Advocate Aurora patients—we will immunize anyone in that age group. We cannot schedule until approval, but parents will be able to go to www.aah.org to schedule, once approved."



Chicago to start vaccinations for children as young as 12 this week

Roseanne Tellez and Elizabeth Matthews

May 11, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/chicago-to-start-vaccinations-for-children-as-young-as-12-this-week>

The CDC is expected to approve the [Pfizer vaccine](#) for kids ages 12 to 15 on Wednesday and doctors in Chicago and surrounding counties say they are ready to vaccinate the young teens as soon as Thursday.

In preparation of an increase in demand, five Cook County mass vaccination sites are extending their hours, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays. The changes are coming to the Matteson, River Grove, South Holland, Des Plaines, and Forest Park sites.

Most Chicago vaccination sites that offer the Pfizer doses are expecting to be able to offer it to 12 to 15-year-olds on Thursday. That also goes for Cook County, Will and Lake county clinics.

Appointments will not be necessary as most clinics are accepting walk-ins. Make sure you check with the clinic before your teenager gets vaccinated, as some sites may require a parent to be present, while others may just require a parent or guardian's signature.

In addition, now comes the job of convincing parents it's safe for their children to get the shot.

A group of pediatricians, who are parents themselves, joined together Tuesday to do just that.

Representing the Chicagoland Children's Health Alliance, the group said while children and teens are less likely to get seriously ill from the virus they do account for one quarter of the new cases and can still spread the virus.

"Even those who have not contracted the disease have certainly felt it's lasting effects in other ways," said Dr. Sharon Robinson, a pediatrician at NorthShore University Health System. "They have missed out on graduations, birthday celebrations and play dates."

Dr. Robinson said unfounded fears about the vaccine include the potential for infertility or irregular periods.

But all three doctor participating in the news conference said as far as they're concerned, the sooner you can get your child a shot the better.

"Please remember by vaccinating everyone in your household ages 12 and up you're helping to protect the vulnerable children in your household and across our community," said Dr. Allison Bartlett, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children's Hospital said.

The group said children face the same side effects from the vaccine as adults: tenderness at the injection site, fatigue aches and chills. But health officials say the vaccine is even more effective in the 12 to 15 age group.

"Your chances of having an adverse side effects from actually getting the virus or a complication is higher than any risk that you would have from getting the vaccine," said Dr. Frank Belmonte, the chief medical officer of Advocate Children's Hospital.

"So as a pediatrician and the father of two daughters that are in this age group, I'm getting my daughters vaccinated as soon as I can schedule the appointment."

South suburban vaccination rates lag despite expanded access to shots

Mike Nolan

May 11, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/ct-sta-southland-vaccination-site-demand-st-0512-20210511-fzktdfghczb6vnry6jb6uj3fsi-story.html>

Although walk-in options have made it easier to get the COVID-19 vaccine, some south suburbs are lagging in vaccination rates compared with other suburban regions of Cook County, according to county data.

About half all eligible suburban Cook County residents have so far received at least one dose, and about a third have been fully vaccinated. Will County health officials say that about 32% of county residents have been fully vaccinated.

Cook County said it also expects to soon begin offering the Pfizer vaccine for children 12 and older following approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Officials said they are awaiting expected approval of the vaccine's use by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Cook County data shows more than 55% of north suburban residents having so far received at least their initial dose compared with 46% of those living in the west suburbs, 43% of southwest suburban residents and 36% of south suburban residents.

County health officials in late March rolled out an initiative to boost vaccination rates in 32 suburbs including several south suburban communities, such as Blue Island, Chicago Heights, Dixmoor, Harvey, Riverdale and Robbins.

The county said it is using "hyperlocal tactics," such as mobile vaccination programs and working with community-based groups and private health providers to reach suburban areas that have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

The county said that vaccine demand has softened in recent weeks, which makes efforts to reach underserved communities all the more important.

Toward that end, county health officials said that, as of Tuesday, operating hours at some suburban vaccination sites, including three in the Southland, have been expanded.

The Matteson site, 4647 Promenade Way, and a mass vaccination facility at South Suburban College, 15800 State St., South Holland, are now open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

A vaccination site at Thornton Fractional South High School, 18500 Burnham Ave., Lansing, has also expanded operating hours to 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

The two-dose Pfizer and the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine are available at the Tinley Park Convention Center vaccination site, 18451 Convention Center Drive. Operating hours there will remain 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Cook County said it expects to begin offering the Pfizer vaccine, at sites where that particular vaccine is given, to those 12 and older starting later this week. Children have to be accompanied by a parent or guardian, and parents can register at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov to make appointments. Sites will also accept walk-ins.

Vaccination rates vary throughout the south and southwest suburbs, according to county figures.

In south suburbs targeted for special attention, vaccination rates had been in the single digits, but have been on the upswing.

In deciding which communities to concentrate vaccination efforts, the county used what it calls the COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index which considers factors such as community demographics, preexisting health conditions of residents, access to transportation and health care.

Numbers of COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 related deaths were also figured into the equation.

In Dixmoor, as of late March, fewer than 5% of residents had received the first shot and a little more than 2% had received both doses, according to the county. Currently, a bit more than 12% have gotten the initial shot but just under 9% are fully vaccinated.

In Harvey, another suburb singled out for the outreach effort, a little more than 8% of residents in that city had gotten an initial dose as of late March and just under 4% had gotten both shots, according to the county.

Currently 23% of Harvey residents have the first shot and more than 15% are fully vaccinated, according to the county.

In Robbins, 17% of residents had received their initial dose as of late March, and nearly 10% had received both shots. Currently, a bit more than 28% of residents have had their initial dose and just over 20% are fully vaccinated.

In Oak Lawn, more than 45% of residents have gotten their initial dose and 35% are fully vaccinated, and more than 59% of Orland Park residents have received their first shot with more than 48% fully vaccinated, according to the county.

Daily Herald

Get the kids vaccinated? Many suburban parents eager to get it done, but others hesitate

May 12, 2021

Jake Griffin

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210511/get-the-kids-vaccinated-many-suburban-parents-eager-to-get-it-done-but-others-hesitate>

Julie Herrera never really had to ask her 12-year-old daughter Ella if she wanted to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

"I think she knew it had been approved for kids her age before I did," the Naperville mother of two teenagers said. "She asked me today if I'd made her an appointment, and I had to tell her they weren't available yet."

While the U.S. Food and Drug Administration [approved use of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine](#) Monday for anyone 12 and older, a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention immunization panel still has to authorize its use for 12- to 15-year-olds. That move is expected Wednesday.

Some public health agencies are so confident that the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will give the OK that they are offering vaccines within the next few days.

In Lake County, appointments can be made for Thursday at the county fairgrounds in Grayslake through [the allvax.lakecohealth.org website](#). DuPage County Health Department officials said appointments will probably be available by Monday and appointments could be made at [their website, dupagehealth.org/covid19vaccine](#).

For those in Cook County, officials plan to begin inoculating anyone 12 and older on Thursday and appointments are available [through vaccine.cookcountyil.gov](#).

"We are now seeing the highest rates of COVID-19 infections in younger people," said Dr. Gregory Huhn, infectious disease physician and Cook County Health's COVID-19 vaccine coordinator. "If we want kids to return to school, sports and friends as safely as possible, they should be vaccinated. It is our best chance at giving them some sense of normalcy back."

Health experts acknowledge many parents are hesitant or opposed to vaccinating their children.

Some parents cite the fact the vaccine has been authorized only for "emergency use" by the FDA. Pfizer is in the process of seeking licensed authorization from the FDA for full use of the vaccine to assuage such concerns.

"I need more data to feel this is truly safe for my kids," a Barrington woman said in response to a Daily Herald Facebook question about vaccinating 12- to 15-year-olds. She said the adults in her family are vaccinated.

Other parents say they can't wait to get their kids vaccinated.

Ruby Reveles is on her third round of securing vaccines for her family. She got herself and her husband fully vaccinated, and then her two oldest sons, who are 17 and 20, as they became eligible. Now, the Montgomery woman is back online looking for appointments for 14-year-old Brian and 15-year-old AJ.

"They both said it was something they wanted to do," she said. "Even though one is usually a little more cautious than the other, they both said they feel more at risk without the vaccine. And I want them to have it because they're now the most susceptible to it because they're the youngest, and that's not fair to them."

Illinois Department of Public Health records show that hospitalizations of children for COVID-19 more than doubled during a two-week span in April and still remain 55% higher than before that spike.

In comparison, COVID-19 hospitalizations among adults in Illinois grew by 33% during the two-week spike in April and now have dipped back to the same level as before.

A 15-year-old from Bolingbrook died last week after testing positive for COVID-19.

Warrenville 14-year-old Peter Banaszek said he wants to get vaccinated so school will be "normal again" and he won't have to worry about getting sick.

His mom, Jessica, said the decision ultimately is her son's, but he's seen her and her husband, as well as his older sisters, get the vaccine.

"It was a no-brainer for him," she said. "He has seen what the pandemic has done to our community, and since both my husband and I work in health care, he was concerned for our safety and relieved when we got our vaccinations."

Dr. Caroline Fulton, a child and adolescent psychologist at Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield, said parents should discuss the decision to get vaccinated with their children so they are part of the process.

"Maintaining a nonjudgmental approach no matter what side they're on is important," Fulton said. "This presents a great opportunity for parents to model how to seek out reliable information."

She urged parents to check in with the child's pediatrician with any concerns the parents or children might have about getting vaccinated.

Those under age 18 must have a parent or legal guardian with them to receive a vaccination.

"I would encourage all parents to get their children vaccinated," Dr. Rochelle Walensky, head of the CDC, said during a U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing Tuesday. "I recognize there are some parents who want to see how it goes because they don't want to be first, but I'm also encouraging children to ask for the vaccine."

Information from the American Academy of Pediatrics about the COVID-19 vaccine and children is at [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org). The academy, based in Itasca, will hold an online "town hall" about vaccinations for adolescents at 7 p.m. Thursday. Registration is at https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_61dBaJUFTeKmqLycNnWwBg.

Some suburban school districts and park districts are offering vaccination clinics for teenagers.

Naperville Unit District 203 and neighboring Indian Prairie Unit District 204 have scheduled a clinic for May 22 for students who are eligible. Officials said younger students who become eligible will likely be able to book appointments, too.

Itasca Park District officials said they still have spots available at a vaccination clinic being held Friday and there is no residency requirement. [Registration is available through eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com). The second dose will be administered Friday, June 4.



Osco Pharmacy to Begin Administering COVID Vaccine to Children 12 and Older

May 12, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/osco-pharmacy-to-begin-administering-covid-vaccine-to-children-12-and-older/2508905/>

Osco Drug Pharmacy announced they will administer the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to children 12 and older after receiving approval from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wednesday.

The pharmacy noted that those over the age of 18 can also receive the free Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines either by a scheduled or walk-in appointment at Oscos.

To schedule a vaccine at Osco, click [here](#).

Cook County announced plans Tuesday to [open its mass vaccination sites to children ages 12 to 15](#) later this week after the Pfizer vaccine receives approval from federal regulators to expand to kids in that age group.

"Cook County Health is looking forward to welcoming newly-eligible adolescents age 12-15 for vaccination later this week," the county said.

The county noted that parents will be able to make [appointments for their children ages 12 to 15 online](#) once CDC approval has been granted, adding that the county's mass vaccination sites will continue to accept walk-ins.

The recommendation from CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky comes hours after [the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices endorsed the change](#), which was adopted 14-0 with one abstention. Two days earlier, the Food and Drug Administration [approved](#) Pfizer and BioNTech's request to allow their shot to be given to young teens on an emergency use basis.

President Joe Biden called the endorsement "one more giant step in our fight against the pandemic."

During Wednesday's meeting, CDC officials said there were no serious adverse events associated with the Pfizer-BioNTech shot in 12- to 15-year-olds out of more than 2,000 children in the companies' clinical trial. Most vaccine recipients, 91%, experienced side effects of some kind.

The most commonly reported side effects were pain at the injection site and in joints and muscles, tiredness, headache, chills and fever, Pfizer scientist Dr. John Perez told the panel. With the exception of pain at the injection site, more adolescents reported side effects after the second dose than after the first. Side effects usually resolved within one to two days, he said.

Children make up around 20% of the total U.S. population of 331 million, according to government data. Between 70% and 85% of the U.S. population needs to be vaccinated against Covid to achieve herd immunity, experts say, and some adults may refuse to get the shots. More experts now say, though, that herd immunity is looking increasingly unlikely as variants spread.

As of Tuesday, more than 150 million Americans age 18 and older have received at least one dose, according to data compiled by the CDC. Roughly 115 million American adults are fully vaccinated, according to the agency. About 13% of adults say they definitely won't get a vaccine while 21% say they will "wait and see" or will get one only if required, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

CDC officials told the panel that research shows vaccine hesitancy among parents, with only about 46% to 60% who said they wanted to get their kids vaccinated. Reasons for not getting the shots included concerns about safety, the time it took to develop the vaccine and not having enough information, officials said.

The vaccine was found to be 100% effective in the clinical trial of 12- to 15-year-olds. No deaths were reported. More serious side effects were more common in the vaccine group, with about 11% reporting things such as pain at the injection site that prevented daily activity, severe fever, headache or muscle pain.



Teen who helped Chicagoans get COVID-19 vaccine appointment receives first dose

May 12, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/teen-who-helped-chicagoans-get-covid-19-vaccine-appointment-receives-first-dose/>

After helping others in the Chicago area find available shots, a young vaccine hunter was among the first in Cook County's 12 to 15 age group to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Walking into Cook County's mass vaccination site in Forest Park, 15-year-old Benjamin Kagan told WGN the moment felt surreal.

"To be able to stand out here and go inside and roll up my sleeve, and get that shot, it just feels absolutely incredible," Kagan said.

WGN first told viewers about the freshman from Francis Parker back in February when vaccine demand was extremely high and supply extremely low.

"I've learned all the different sites," Kagan told WGN in February. "I know this place drops at midnight. This place drops at 9 p.m."

As he prepared for his first dose of the vaccine, Kagan reflected upon his group, [Chicago Vaccine Angels](#), who he says has helped thousands of Chicago area residents get their shots.

"It's the people that really get to me and keep me going," Kagan said. "To be able to give them a helping hand and get them vaccinated, it just makes me feel incredible."

Wednesday was Kagan's turn.

"I'm done?" Kagan asked after the dose. "That was it? Oh, that was easy."

Kagan's friend, Sam Forst, tagged along to get vaccinated.

"I kind of feel for us all of us to be in-person, that's where we do our best learning, we need to get this shot," Forst said.

After the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) granted emergency use authorization of the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 12 to 15, [a CDC panel endorsed the move Thursday](#), clearing the way for vaccinations to start immediately.

"This is our way out of the pandemic," said Dr. Nimmi Rajagopal. Doctors with County Health say parents shouldn't hesitate to vaccinate their children.

Kagan says he's glad he didn't have to wait.

"It feels absolutely amazing," the high schooler said. "I've been waiting for this for a very, very long time."



COVID Vaccine for 12-15: Where Kids Can Get Vaccinated in the Chicago Area

A number of health departments across the Chicago area have announced plans to begin vaccinating children

May 13, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/covid-vaccine-for-12-15-where-kids-can-get-vaccinated-in-the-chicago-area/2509105/>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has signed off on use of [Pfizer's](#) COVID vaccine for children ages 12 to 15, clearing the way for shots to begin Thursday.

Where can parents get their kids vaccinated in the Chicago area?

A number of health departments have announced plans to begin vaccinating children in that age group, as have health care providers. Here's a look at what jurisdictions and providers have said:

Chicago

Chicago's Department of Public Health announced Tuesday that COVID-19 vaccination sites will open to children ages 12 to 15 beginning Thursday, with the option to book appointments now in anticipation of the CDC's recommendation.

A full list of Chicago sites can be found [here](#).

City health officials also said that pharmacies and health care providers across Chicago will also be prepared to vaccinate children beginning Thursday.

Cook County

"Cook County Health is looking forward to welcoming newly-eligible adolescents age 12-15 for vaccination later this week," the county said.

The county noted that parents are able to make [appointments for their children ages 12 to 15 online](#), adding that the county's mass vaccination sites will continue to accept walk-ins.

Lake County

The Lake County Health Department announced plans to open COVID-19 vaccinations to children ages 12 to 15 years old beginning Thursday.

Parents and legal guardians can register their children on the Lake County [AllVax Portal](#) for appointments at the Lake County Fairgrounds in Grayslake or Regional Vaccination Site at 102 W. Water Street, Waukegan, health officials said.

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"Families are encouraged to receive their vaccines together so that all members are protected," Kathy Fossier, interim executive director at the Kane County Health Department, said in a statement.

The sites will be open for walk-ins, but a parent or guardian should accompany youth under age 18. If a parent or guardian is unable to attend, they can sign a consent form and allow another adult to accompany a minor. The consent form can be found online at [KaneHealth.com](https://www.kanehealth.com) and at [KaneVax.org](https://www.kanevax.org).

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“I think a lot of parents probably would feel more comfortable getting in their pediatrician's office, but whether you get it at the pediatrician or the pharmacy or health department, I think the shot is the shot at that point,” Dr. Scott Goldstein, a pediatrician at Northwestern Children’s Practice said.

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital [is scheduling appointments](#) ages 12 to 15 once approval happens.

A spokesperson for Advocate Children’s Hospital said the hospital is "ready immediately to begin scheduling adolescents 12-15."

Those looking to get their shots "will not have to be Advocate Aurora patients—we will immunize anyone in that age group," a spokesperson said, adding that parents will be able to go to www.aah.org to schedule.

Cook County, Chicago vaccination sites to offer Pfizer vaccines for children 12 and older

Many Chicago and Cook County vaccination sites will open up to adolescents 12-15 years old on Thursday.

Molly Lubbers, Assistant City Editor

May 13, 2021

<https://dailynorthwestern.com/2021/05/13/city/cook-county-chicago-vaccination-sites-to-offer-pfizer-vaccines-for-children-12-and-older/>

Several Cook County and Chicago mass vaccination sites will offer Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines for children ages 12-15 starting on Thursday, a change from the country's previous 16+ age requirement for the Pfizer vaccine.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended the administration of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines to 12- to 15-year-olds Wednesday afternoon. Earlier this week, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized the emergency use of the Pfizer vaccine for this age group following a human clinical trial, multiple evaluations from physicians and scientists and a final approval from FDA staff.

"Like adults, all youth age(d) 12 and older are encouraged to get the vaccine," Chicago Department of Public Health commissioner Allison Arwady said in a Chicago news release. "Current data show that the vaccine is safe and effective in children, and it not only protects our kids, but also their families and our communities."

The CDC action opens up vaccination to approximately 17 million adolescents across the U.S., CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said in a statement. Walensky's recommendation was made after the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices voted 14-0 for the change with one abstention.

In anticipation of increased demand, Cook County Health expanded hours for five mass vaccination sites that offer Pfizer vaccines. The sites are as follows.

- Matteson – 4647 Promenade Way, Matteson, IL
- River Grove – Triton College, 2000 5th Avenue, River Grove, IL
- South Holland – South Suburban College, 15800 State Street, South Holland, IL
- Des Plaines – 1155 E Oakton Street, Des Plaines, IL
- Forest Park – 7630 West Roosevelt Road, Forest Park, IL

These vaccination locations will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, according to a Cook County Health news release. The release said hours will remain the same at the Tinley Park mass vaccination site, which offers Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccines.

Walk-ins are available at all CCH mass vaccination sites. Individuals can also make appointments at the [Cook County vaccination website](#). or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m and 10 p.m. Monday-Friday or 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, according to a CCH news release.

Chicago-run vaccination sites that currently offer Pfizer vaccine will also open to those 12 and over for both walk-ins and appointments, according to a Chicago news release. Parents and guardians can make appointments for children 12 and older online at [Zocdoc](#) or by calling 312-746-4835. The sites are as follows.

- A.A.C.C. @ Gallagher Way Wrigley Field, 1119 W. Waveland
- Apostolic Faith Church, 3823 S. Indiana

- Chicago State University Walk-Up, 9501 South King Drive
- United Center drive-thru, 1724 W. Madison
- Richard J. Daley College, 7500 S. Pulaski
- Wilbur Wright College, 4300 N. Narragansett
- Loretto Hospital, 645 S. Central



COVID-19 vaccine: Chicago-area vaccination sites, pharmacies begin vaccinating ages 12+

Jessica D'Onofrio and Stacey Baca

May 13, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/where-to-find-vaccines-for-young-teens/10624882/>

Children across the state between the ages of 12 and 15 rolled up their sleeves to get the Pfizer vaccine on Thursday, the first day mass vaccination sites and hospitals began administering the vaccine to the younger age group.

The good news is, this is the exact same Pfizer vaccine and dosage that is used for adults. So making an appointment should be relatively straightforward: Parents can simply go to any site that already offers Pfizer.

All mass vaccination clinics in Chicago will be open for the new age group Thursday. No appointment is needed, but parental consent is required.

Chicago mass vaccination clinics offering Pfizer vaccine to anyone 12 and older:

A.A.C.C. at Gallagher Way Wrigley Field

Apostolic Faith Church

Chicago State University

United Center

Richard J. Daley College

Wilbur Wright College

Lorreto Hospital

A mobile vaccination bus will bring vaccines to 15 Chicago Public Schools in May and June for students and their parents. The bus will offer Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the following locations:

-May 15: Chicago Vocational Career Academy, Juarez, Marshall, Nash, and Westinghouse (Bus will return for second doses on June 5)

-May 22: Bouchet, Brunson Ray, Simeon, and Southside(Second doses on June 12)

-May 29: Carver, Englewood STEM, Fenger, and King (Second doses on June 19)

Geneva Dadabo, 12, closed her eyes as the needle went in, but it was over before she even knew it. She was among the first in line Thursday morning to get the Pfizer vaccine at Advocate Sherman Hospital in Elgin. She said she is looking forward to more normalcy.

"Not having to wear the mask, being able to hug and play games," Geneva said.

Her mother, Rachael Dadabo, said she used to be hesitant about vaccines in general, but now she has become a believer.

"I started to view vaccination as more of a community protection versus individual, and that's really what shifted me to being much more pro-vaccines," Rachael Dadabo said.

The vaccine clinic here has been relatively busy giving shots to those over 16 for some time now. But the head of pediatrics at Advocate Sherman Hospital said getting younger adolescents vaccinated could make a big difference for the entire community.

"It's just as important for the kids to be vaccinated to help protect their friends, their family, their peers, and more importantly, the community at large," said Dr. Rupal Upadhyay.

More than a third of those getting vaccinated there on Thursday were under 16, including Madeline Osmanski, who said she is the first among her friends, though most are planning on getting it. She feels fortunate at this point not to have any side effects.

"I feel pretty good. I'm glad I got the shot," said Osmanski.

Advocate Sherman Hospital just administered their 40,000th dose of the vaccine Wednesday. And with a fresh population of 12-15 year olds lining up to get it, they plan to keep the clinic open indefinitely.

Several Cook County mass vaccination sites are offering extended hours so kids can come after school starting Thursday.

"It's just kind of a weight off my shoulders knowing that I'm vaccinated, and if I do get COVID or corona, I will not be heavily impacted by it because I got the vaccine," said Camila Rodriguez. She is 12 years old and has Type 1 diabetes.

"With her being vaccinated, we're more at ease for her to return to school, return to other activities she had to stop because of the virus," said Grecia Rodriguez, Camila's mother.

Matthew Liebl, 15, has allergies and a long list of reasons for getting the shot.

"We can play sports and stuff, go back to school, go places, hang out with friends some more," he said.

Children are eager, even if they're a bit nervous about the needle.

"I just don't like getting shots, blood drawn or any other kind of shots, but I was really excited to have this over with," said Chloe Sedler, 15.

"It's been remarkably easy to sign up, so we're just very, very, happy," her father said.

In Des Plaines, Cook County Health officials along with their children push the message at a vaccination site open for appointments and walk-ins.

"I want all parents to know the vaccine is safe and incredibly effective at protecting their children, and they should have them vaccinated as soon as possible," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-lead, Cook County Dept. of Public Health.

Cook County Health workers did just that. Their kids all held up signs listing their reasons for getting the vaccine.

"The COVID-19 vaccine is my shot on getting back to a normal life soon," Jaida Prachand said.

"My COVID vaccine shot is my chance to play sports and protect my family members around me," Leo Loza said.

And being kids, they also have this on their mind.

"It gives me more freedom. Now I can see my friends," said Nola Mandell, 15.

At the Gallagher Way mass vaccination site at Wrigley Field, there was a steady stream of people Thursday morning.

And the kids seemed very excited to be there, saying getting their shots is going to make them feel safer.

Liam Samet, 12, was accompanied by his mom.

The student at Skinner North was excited about getting his shot and making plans.

"Kind of hang out with my friends more, have some play dates, hang out, things like that," Samet said. "It's really exciting to get your vaccine. It's like a light at the end of the tunnel."

Fellow 12-year-old Zara Smejkal agreed.

"It's kinda nice because because I like don't have to worry about COVID as much anymore," Smejkal said.

Eighth-grader Natalie Arora said she was excited to feel safer and maybe even travel.

"Of course I need to get my second vaccine," she said.

Lori Eppstein, Arora's mother, said the choice was a "no-brainer."

"You know, we don't want her to catch COVID, obviously, and, also, if she catches COVID, we can catch it, too; so even though we're now vaccinated, it's always a risk," Eppstein said.

Some kids came with appointments, and some simply walked in without a problem.

One family said there was a glitch, since their daughter didn't have an ID card, but the vaccination site worked it out, and she was able to get her shot.

Meanwhile, Walgreens is planning to offer shots to younger teenagers at its pharmacies.

The Deerfield-based company said it's working with more than 1,000 school districts across the country offering vaccinations to school children in their stores and clinics.

"The roll out for kids is going to be exactly like we have done for adults," said Dr. Kevin Ban, chief medical officer at Walgreens.

Jewel-Osco is also offering younger teens vaccines.

Chicago Tribune

Children 12 to 15 begin receiving COVID-19 vaccinations in Chicagoland. ‘I want him to hug me without being afraid.’

Madeline Buckley

May 13, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-young-teens-covid-vaccinations-begin-20210513-m7xb7bf2uvgs3pivm724g57o6q-story.html>

Michael Pacheco, 14, has not lived at his Chicago home since the beginning of the pandemic.

Because he is immunocompromised with asthma and Crohn’s disease, Michael has lived for the past year with his grandparents in Arlington Heights, where the health risks are fewer. Both his parents are essential workers — his mom is a bank manager and his dad works for Commonwealth Edison.

On Thursday, Michael took the first step toward finally going home when he got his first dose of the Pfizer vaccine while his mother, Ella Pacheco, sat next to him, wiping her eyes.

“I want him to hug me without being afraid,” Ella Pacheco said, outside an Advocate Aurora Health outpatient center in Des Plaines.

Thursday marked the first day that children ages 12 to 15 could receive the COVID-19 vaccine in the Chicago area, days after the Food and Drug Administration authorized the Pfizer vaccine for emergency use for the tweens and teens.

The vaccine also received approval from an advisory panel for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Full CDC approval was granted Wednesday.

Parents flocked to area vaccination sites on Thursday with their eligible children after government-run vaccination sites and other providers spent recent days gearing up.

Chicago health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady advised parents that the vaccine is safe for their children during an online question-and-answer session Thursday.

“Just to be really clear on this, (vaccines) have gotten the same level of scrutiny for kids, in fact a higher level of scrutiny for kids,” Arwady said. “That’s why we start with adults and then move ahead with children.”

Cook County Health officials also took the opportunity to urge parents to vaccinate their children. Dr. Kiran Joshi, Cook County Department of Public Health co-lead, said he is “so incredibly relieved” that his son will be vaccinated.

Cook County Health vaccination sites saw an uptick in appointments on Thursday when vaccine eligibility expanded, a spokeswoman said.

Michael Pacheco is still six weeks from returning home. That is when he will have received both shots and be considered fully immune. He has mostly only seen his family through video chats, but on Thursday was able to talk and laugh with three of his cousins in the health center’s parking lot because they all had vaccine appointments at the same time.

Though he misses his family and friends, Michael also sees the silver lining of his arrangement for the past year.

“It’s a gift in disguise,” he said. “A lot of people don’t have this kind of time with their grandparents.”

State-run mass vaccination sites and other facilities already stocked with the Pfizer vaccine were prepared to begin administering doses to 12- to 15-year-olds “immediately,” Gov. J.B. Pritzker tweeted late Wednesday afternoon.

Last week, state officials said they were working with pediatricians to begin administering the vaccine. Schools also are eligible to partner with local health departments to offer vaccination clinics, state officials said, as is the case for upcoming pop-up events with Chicago Public Schools.

Mahnoor Aetzaz, 15, walked out of a Cook County mass vaccination site in Des Plaines looking cheerful. She said she was nervous but barely felt the prick of the needle.

“My mom, she was so anxious,” Aetzaz said. “She was so quick to get an appointment today.”

Aetzaz has not been going to school in person, and has rarely seen friends during the past year. Now that she will soon be fully vaccinated, the teen spoke excitedly of travel and amusement parks. She has an upcoming trip to New Jersey to see family members.

Children are a key part of the strategy to have as many people as possible vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, especially as vaccine hesitancy among adults is an increasingly growing concern and possible deterrent to reaching herd immunity. And though children overall have contracted the virus at lower rates and usually become less sick, they can infect more vulnerable people.



Lucia Castellanos, 12, of Des Plaines, looks away as she receives a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine from nurse Meredith Price at a Cook County Health COVID-19 vaccine site in Des Plaines on May 13, 2021. Children ages 12 to 15 are now eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine. (Jose M. Osorio / Chicago Tribune)

There have also been more than 3,700 reported cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome, a serious condition that has mostly affected children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Dr. Ngozi Ezike, director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, said in a statement that the ability to vaccinate younger adolescents “will not only help protect our younger population, it will help us get back to in-person learning across the state.”

Since the first vaccines were announced late last year, [pediatricians have consistently](#) called on the drug manufacturers to include children in their COVID-19 vaccine trials to ensure they are vaccinated as soon as possible.

In March, Pfizer and Moderna both began testing their vaccines in children 6 months to 11 years old. Experts [have said a request for emergency](#) authorization for that cohort is still likely months away.

Even as the CDC has eased some guidelines for vaccinated people, some parents are still taking those precautions due to their unvaccinated children. And parents who were able to bring their older children to be vaccinated on Thursday breathed a sigh of relief.

“We are elated,” said Tara Bolz, whose son was vaccinated Thursday.

Among providers who announced they could begin providing the Pfizer vaccine to the 12 to 15 age group are CVS, Walgreens and Jewel-Osco. Some providers say that children have to be accompanied by an adult with parental or legal guardian consent.

Zocdoc, which has facilitated vaccine appointments for the city of Chicago, said appointments for people under 18 must be booked by a parent or guardian. The company has a [guide](#) for making such appointments.



Teen: 'I feel safer' after school vaccination

May 13, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/teen-feel-safer-school-vaccination-230047773.html>

Eager parents got shots for their teens and tweens throughout the Chicago area on the first day 12 to 15 year olds could receive the COVID 19 vaccine. Vaccination sites included some schools. (May 13)

Video Transcript

- I couldn't get my 12 and 15-year-old daughters that shot in their arm fast enough.

EMMY NOVOSEL: I think it's cool that it's at school because I can see all my fellow classmates getting it, and then I know that people around me all have it. It's going to make me feel a lot safer when I go out and go into school.

ALI NOVOSEL: I won't have to worry so much about the little things like putting on my mask or staying super far apart from people.

NANCY FENDLEY: The two days of vaccines, specifically for the 12 to 15-year-old range, filled within minutes on line. That's how anxious parents like myself are to avoid our kids getting COVID.

YANET CONDE: I was glad because now, I can be safer. And soon, we'll be able to do normal things.



Teen: 'I feel safer' after school vaccination

May 13, 2021

<https://www.usatoday.com/videos/news/nation/2021/05/13/teen-feel-safer-after-school-vaccination/5082542001/>

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On first day of eligibility, Chicago area kids eager to receive COVID-19 vaccine

Gaynor Hall

May 13, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/on-first-day-of-eligibility-chicago-area-kids-eager-to-receive-covid-19-vaccine/>

Cook County health officials repeated the message Thursday that the Pfizer vaccine is safe for kids 12 and up and necessary to expand immunity in the community.

At the Des Plaines mass vaccination site, Cook County health employees with their children explained why they chose to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

"My shot at having a normal freshman year," one child said. "Have parties for the summer," said another.

For 8th grader Gianna Amidei, her reasoning was more sentimental.

"Since the pandemic, I haven't really been able to see my brother," said Amidei, who says her little brother is battling leukemia.

"It's been hard," she said. "Very hard."

Now, she says she can't wait to get fully vaccinated, so she can give her brother "the biggest hug ever."

Gianna Amidei's mom, Marisol Nunez, a clinic manager for North Riverside Health Center, says it's time for parents on the fence to "trust in science and protect our kids with everything at our disposal."

In an effort to try to convince the hesitant, state officials hope incentives will help.

Governor JB Pritzker announced Thursday that Six Flags would give out 50,000 free tickets to encourage people to roll up their sleeves.

"We're looking at a lot of ways to incentivize and use our resources as best as we can," Pritzker added.

"I'm 100% confident this will motivate people," said Hank Salemi, Six Flags Great America president. "That's why we're doing it."

At the Des Plaines mass vaccination site, the vaccination line moved quickly. County doctors urged parents to get their children vaccinated as quickly as possible.

"Yes I am a doctor, but more importantly I am a mother," said Dr. Whitney Lyn, a family medicine physician. "That's why I'm encouraging my patients to get vaccinated."



'Chicago Tonight' in Your Neighborhood: Village of Riverdale

Marissa Nelson and Paris Schutz

May 13, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/05/13/chicago-tonight-your-neighborhood-village-riverdale>

The Village of Riverdale is in south suburban Cook County. Separated by the Calumet River, it borders the community of Riverdale in the city of Chicago. Residents say it's a close-knit, warm community.

COVID-19 vaccination rates in the village — along with other communities in south suburban Cook County — lag behind those in other parts of the county, particularly on the north side of Cook.

Interactive map: [More from our community reporting series](#)

Nearly 20% of Riverdale residents have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, while nearly 14.2% have completed the vaccine series, according to [the Cook County Department of Public Health](#). Compared to [47.9% of Cook County](#) residents who have received at least one dose of the vaccine, and 36.6% who have completed the series as of Thursday.

A number of factors contribute to that lower vaccination rate. One is mistrust in medical institutions and health systems, said Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior public health medical officer and co-lead of CCDPH.

"There's a certain level of hesitancy in those communities," Rubin said. "They are mainly communities of color, African American communities that have not had easy or ready access to health care."

Internet access to sign up for a vaccine appointment and transportation to those appointments are some other challenges in south suburban Cook County, said Dr. Lisa Green, CEO and co-founder of the [Family Christian Health Center](#), which has a location in Harvey, near Riverdale.

"You can be what's a 10-minute car ride here and it's an hour and a half on public transportation," Green said.

The center has been providing COVID-19 vaccines at its locations and hosting pop-up clinics around its communities.

Green said provider-patient relationships are a key part of getting communities vaccinated. However, because access to transportation may be an obstacle, Family Christian Health Center — along with other clinics in the area — started meeting residents where they are, in churches, schools and businesses.

"That's why what we started doing was going out to the community," Green said. "We realized community care wasn't just in the building that we resided in, but it was the community, and sometimes you've got to move out of that space you're in to get people to where they need to be."

The Riverdale Park District hosted a vaccine clinic in April to help increase access to the vaccine, and the residents who participated will get their second shots this weekend. The local CVS is the community's main vaccination site.

Riverdale Park District Board President Betty Ervin-Robinson said it's important for residents to be able to get the vaccine in more intimate settings.

“Most people want to have it at a smaller location, not just a mass vaccination site. I think it’s more personable, they feel like, ‘I’m just not on a line somewhere getting a shot,’” Ervin-Robinson said.

In addition to the CVS, the village has been working to inform residents about vaccine availability in surrounding areas and helping them to get there. Nearby sites include Calumet Park, South Suburban College and Blue Island.

“We have been, as a community and as an administration, trying to get our residents more informed about what’s going on and get them any kind of resources we can in order to help them get vaccinated,” said Fire Chief Mick Smith.



Health officials announce 'Bridge to Phase 5' reopening guidance in suburban Cook County

May 14, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/health-officials-announce-bridge-to-phase-5-reopening-guidance-in-suburban-cook-county>

The Cook County Department of Public Health on Friday issued Bridge to Phase 5 reopening guidance for suburban Cook County.

"The vaccination rate and improved metrics are encouraging, but to fully reopen we encourage everyone over the age of 12 to get vaccinated and continue to wear a mask, watch your physical distance and wash your hands," Senior Medical Officer and Co-Lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health Dr. Kiran Joshi said in a statement.

The Bridge to Phase 5 includes the following increases in capacities:

Retail

Capacity limits increase from 50% to 60%

Fitness Centers

Capacity limits in centers increase from 50% to 60%, (class size remains the same, up to 50 people indoor and 100 outdoor)

Restaurants and Bars

Indoor dining capacity increases to 75% (from 50% or 100 people)

No table size limits for parties if all patrons 16 and older are fully-vaccinated

For those not fully-vaccinated, table size is 10 indoors and outdoors

Zoos and Museums

Capacity increases from 25% to 60%

Festivals and outdoor spectator events

Increase from 15 people per 1,000 square feet, to 30 people per 1,000 square feet

People who are fully vaccinated will not count against capacity limits at businesses or events. In addition, businesses that choose to participate in allowing the exemption of fully-vaccinated patrons must create a system for verifying vaccination status.

Furthermore, health officials want to remind the public that it is possible Illinois could revert to a previous phase of reopening if there is a resurgence of [COVID-19](#).

For more on Cook County Department of Public Health Mitigation Orders, [CLICK HERE](#).

To find a vaccination location near you, [CLICK HERE](#).



Can You Drink Alcohol After Getting the COVID Vaccine? Here's What an Expert Says

The answer, according to an Illinois doctor with Cook County Health, is yes, but there's a catch

May 15, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/can-you-drink-after-getting-the-covid-vaccine-heres-what-an-expert-says/2511069/>

Can you drink alcohol after getting the coronavirus vaccine?

It's a question some have been asking as eligibility in Illinois continues to expand and more people prepare for their first or second dose.

The answer, according to an Illinois doctor with Cook County Health, is yes, but there's a catch.

"It's a great question. The simple, short answer is yes," Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of family and community medicine for Cook County Health, told NBC Chicago. "There's no prohibition against drinking alcohol. It wasn't specifically studied and there's an assumption that some, you know, an average number of people in the study did use alcohol during the study, but it wasn't specifically measured."

"Excessive" alcohol consumption, however, can lead to a weakened immune system, Loafman said.

"We know in general that people who have used alcohol, excessive doses of alcohol, have a weakened immune system and that makes them more susceptible to infection and may weaken their response to a vaccine," he said.

So what is considered excessive? According to Loafman, it's more than two drinks a day for men and more than one drink a day for women with "consistent use over time."

"The caveat is that amount or more of alcohol use is known to be harmful for the immune system," he said. "It doesn't mean the vaccine wouldn't work, but it may weaken the immune system. So routine drinking that people do and in social situations or what we consider moderate alcohol consumption, there's no reason to alter that behavior simply because of the vaccine."

FOREST PARK
REVIEW

12 and over now eligible for COVID-19 vaccine

Walk-ins and appointments available at Forest Park vaccine site

Maria Maxham

May 16, 2021

<https://www.forestparkreview.com/2021/05/16/12-and-over-now-eligible-for-covid-19-vaccine/>

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) announced on May 12 that they are now recommending the use of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in children 12 through 15 years of age, meaning that now anyone aged 12 and older can get the shot.

“CDC now recommends that this vaccine be used among this population, and providers may begin vaccinating them right away,” reads a media release from the CDC.

Locally, anyone aged 12 and over can receive a COVID-19 vaccine at any of the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH)’s six large-scale vaccinations sites, including the one in Forest Park at 7630 Roosevelt Rd., where the Pfizer vaccine is being administered, according to the CCDPH website.

Appointments can be made, but walk-ins are welcome too. Anyone aged 12 to 18 must be physically accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m., and on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information on the Forest Park and other CCDPH locations for the COVID-19 vaccine, visit myshotcookcounty.com/locations/.

Des Plaines Site To Distribute Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Starting Tuesday, May 18

Todd Wessell

May 17, 2021

<https://www.journal-topics.com/articles/des-plaines-site-to-distribute-john-johnson-vaccine-starting-tuesday-may-18/>

Beginning Tuesday, May 18, Cook County Health will resume distributing the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at its Des Plaines mass vaccination site, 1155 East Oakton St.

Visitors to the site will have a choice between the Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. As a reminder, the Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine approved for individuals age 12-17. Pfizer is available for individuals age 18+.

Johnson & Johnson is a one-dose vaccine. Pfizer requires two doses, 21 days apart.

Site hours and vaccinations offered are subject to change. Please visit myshotcookcounty.com for the latest information.



IL was like 'Wild West' in early days of COVID pandemic, but PPE stockpile has recovered

Chuck Goudie and Barb Markoff, Christine Tressel and Ross Weidner

May 17, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/1st-year-of-covid-19-turned-illinois-into-wild-west/10652996/>

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when state shelves emptied of critical medical supplies and the national spigot of safety equipment turned off, Governor JB Pritzker said of state, "It's a Wild West."

North Shore congressman Rep. Brad Schneider was even more blunt at the time, saying, "The left hand doesn't seem to know what the right hand is doing."

Schneider was describing the sometimes vicious competition between states and the federal government for Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE.

A year later, as infection and death rates continue to fall and the emergency winds down, officials at the Illinois Department of Public Health said the state is in far better shape.

"IDPH does have a stockpile of PPE, ventilators, BiBAP machines and equipment needed to transfer vaccine, and we are adding powered air-purifying respirators" said IDPH spokesperson Melaney Arnold. "IDPH has also increased its storage space for supplies."

Despite the Strategic National Stockpile plan classified as a confidential document, Illinois Emergency Management Agency officials "monitor and maintain a 60-day stockpile of all necessary PPE for frontline workers, first responders, long-term care facilities, critical infrastructure workers, daycares/schools, and more" according to Arnold.

"In addition, all counties and accredited local jurisdictions were directed to maintain a 30-day supply of PPE based on an individualized burn rate," she said.

The burn rate is the amount of supplies that authorities would "burn through," or expend, during a crisis.

"This burn rate is calculated using peak pandemic conditions and accounts for the needs of their local health department, first responders, and long-term-care facilities," Arnold said.

More than a year into the pandemic, Cook County's top health official told the I-Team that they are far better prepared now.

"We were tracking the burn" said Dr. Claudia Fegan, chief medical officer for Cook County Health. "We tracked how fast we burned through N95's (face masks), how fast we burned through face shields and goggles."

When the pandemic started Dr. Fegan said there was no central tracking mechanism for equipment and that medical players with the biggest budgets managed to get the most gear when the pandemic began.

"Everybody was competing with everybody else for PPE. If you had more money and you could buy more at the same time," she explained. "You know, near the end, it got to the point that the suppliers were only going to give you so much. But initially, you know, the highest dollar got the supplies and that really squeezed out folks who didn't have the immediate cash available. And so that was a huge problem."

Now there is a strategy in the works, in which each hospital or medical center's needs, based on what officials learned during the COVID-10 pandemic, is factored into the stockpile.

Even as one pandemic seems to be winding down, for Cook County a response to the next one is already on the table.

"You'd be foolish not to be thinking about what's coming next and we expect that there'll be another pandemic," Fegan said. "We expect that the next assault will also be some type of infectious disease."

Coronavirus in Illinois updates: Here's what happened May 18 with COVID-19 in the Chicago area

May 18, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-aud-covid-19-pandemic-chicago-illinois-news-20210518-bjfp72frfjxrm6ojhh3gds5uu-story.html>

Chicago will follow the state of Illinois in allowing [fully vaccinated people to go maskless in most settings](#) — but businesses will be strongly advised to keep a requirement in place, public health officials announced a day after Gov. J.B. Pritzker [loosened mask requirements](#) to follow the latest federal guidance.

Under Tuesday's update to the city's mask guidance, those who are two weeks after their final vaccination dose can take off the mask except when in hospitals, public transportation, jails and schools, public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said during a news conference. But businesses who cannot regulate who is vaccinated and who isn't will be strongly advised to keep mask requirements.

Meanwhile, Chicago got some good news Tuesday when the city announced that [Lollapalooza is returning this summer in full capacity](#). The lineup will be announced Wednesday. This year, proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test result is required to attend. For attendees who are not fully vaccinated, a negative test result must be obtained the day before entry.

That news came shortly after Navy Pier officials announced plans [for a full reopening](#) by Memorial Day.

Illinois bridge phase metrics: [Daily updates on COVID-19 trends](#)

Illinois coronavirus graphs: [The latest data on deaths, confirmed cases, tests and more](#)

How to [get a COVID-19 vaccine in Chicago](#)

Illinois COVID-19 vaccine tracker: [Here's where the state stands](#)

COVID-19 cases in Illinois by ZIP code: [Search for your neighborhood](#)

Here's what's happening Tuesday with COVID-19 in the Chicago area:

4:45 p.m. (update): Chicago issues new mask mandate offering fully vaccinated people more freedom, but urges certain businesses to keep requirements

Chicago will follow the state of Illinois in allowing fully vaccinated people to go maskless in most settings — but some businesses will be strongly advised to keep a requirement in place, public health officials announced a day after Gov. J.B. Pritzker loosened his mask mandate to match the latest federal guidance.

Under Tuesday's update to the city's mask guidance, those who are two weeks after their final vaccination dose can take off the mask except in hospitals, public transportation, jails and schools, public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said during a news conference. She cited strong evidence of the vaccine's effectiveness before adding the caveat that many businesses do not have the ability or "desire" to regulate who is vaccinated and who isn't.

Because of that logistical challenge and the fact that only 38% of Chicagoans are fully vaccinated, those settings will be subject to an optional advisory to continue their masking policy until COVID-19 restrictions are lifted in the city, Arwady said. To avoid confusion, she said, all businesses are asked to post a sign informing customers what their mask policy will be "so the public can choose whether to enter."

“We continue to strongly advise, though not require, masking policies for all indoor settings in Chicago until COVID capacity restrictions are lifted,” Arwady said. “This advisory applies to any setting that does not have the capacity to check vaccination status and/or where employees, clients or attendees are not all known to be vaccinated.”

[Read more here.](#) —Alice Yin

4:30 p.m.: City will once again shut down certain streets for outdoor dining this summer as Chicago Alfresco returns

Last year’s pandemic shutdown proved to be a brutal blow to the hospitality industry, as has been well-documented. One small silver lining of the shutdown, however, was the Chicago Alfresco program, in which the city shut down select streets throughout the city to expand outdoor spaces for dining and activities.

Many restaurants and neighborhood organizations leapt at the chance to participate, so it’s no surprise that the city has announced Chicago Alfresco’s official return for summer 2021.

The program will return in 15 neighborhoods citywide, and it’s part of a larger effort by the city to “open streets and create places for dining, public life, community, arts, culture, walking and biking,” according to the news release. Its first participant — Dineout in Lakeview — debuted last weekend.

The city has also encouraged participants to make the most of their setups and get creative with staging and logistics. As such, many of this year’s street closure plans are a little more cultivated than last year’s ad hoc arrangements.

[Here’s the full lineup.](#) —Adam Lukach

4:20 p.m.: To mask or not to mask? New rules in Illinois and Chicago raise new questions for residents, from doctors to schoolteachers.

To mask or not to mask?

That’s the question for many vaccinated people after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [revised their guidance on where people need to wear masks](#), saying that those who are two weeks past their vaccines can mostly return to pre-pandemic activities without masks.

Following those recommendations, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced new guidelines that [put Illinois in line with the new federal guidance](#). In Chicago, which has at times maintained separate rules from the state throughout COVID-19, [public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said Tuesday](#) that fully vaccinated people can go maskless in most settings, but some businesses will be strongly advised to maintain mask requirements.

According to that guidance, people who are fully vaccinated should still wear masks in health care settings or while riding trains, buses, planes or other forms of public transportation, as well as at airports, bus or train stations.

We asked people who live and work in different areas where they would and would not wear masks, and what they were considering as they made these decisions.

[Read more here.](#) —Alison Bowen

1:20 p.m.: Fully vaccinated people in Chicago won’t be required to wear masks in most settings, public health commissioner says

Chicago will follow the state of Illinois in allowing fully vaccinated people to go maskless in most settings — but businesses will be strongly advised to keep a requirement in place, public health officials announced a day after Gov. J.B. Pritzker loosened mask requirements to follow the latest federal guidance.

Under Tuesday’s update to the city’s mask guidance, those who are two weeks after their final vaccination dose can take off the mask except when in hospitals, public transportation, jails and schools, public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said during a news conference. But businesses who cannot regulate who is vaccinated and who isn’t will be strongly advised to keep mask requirements.

“We continue to strongly advise, though not require, masking policies for all indoor settings in Chicago until COVID capacity restrictions are lifted and we are in Phase Five.,” Arwady said.

[Read more here.](#) —Alice Yin

12:39 p.m.: Indiana clears Chicago’s emergency travel order, now only 7 states remaining on list

Only seven states remain on Chicago’s emergency travel order, which just bumped Indiana off the list on Tuesday, officials said.

The removal of Indiana — two weeks after it was reinstated on the travel order — means none of Illinois’ neighbors are subject to additional coronavirus restrictions, although Midwestern states Minnesota and Michigan are still on the list. In total, 11 states and Puerto Rico moved from the “orange” tier to the “yellow” one, according to a Tuesday Chicago Department of Public Health news release.

The full list of states subject to the orange tier restrictions contains: Colorado, Florida, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, West Virginia and Washington.

[Read more here.](#) —Alice Yin

12:07 p.m.: 1,495 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and 21 deaths reported

Illinois public health officials on Tuesday reported 1,495 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and 21 additional deaths. That brings the state’s totals to 1,368,709 cases and 22,466 deaths.

There were 58,222 tests reported in the previous 24 hours and the seven-day statewide positivity rate as a percent of total test fell to 2.3%.

There were 25,936 vaccine doses administered Monday, but the server pharmacies use was experiencing delays. Those doses should be included in Wednesday’s data, officials said. The seven-day rolling average of daily doses is 56,593.

11:43 a.m.: ‘The opportunity to take a step back’: Pandemic benefits, stimulus checks give some workers time to rethink careers

There’s a wild card in the push to return to post-pandemic life: Many workers don’t want to go back to the jobs they once had.

Layoffs and lockdowns, combined with enhanced unemployment benefits and stimulus checks, gave many Americans the time and the financial cushion to rethink their careers. Their former employers are hiring again — and some, like Uber and McDonald’s, [are offering higher pay](#) — but workers [remain hesitant](#).

In March, U.S. job openings rose 8% to a record 8.1 million, but overall hiring rose less than 4%, according to government data.

Employers and business groups argue that the \$300-per-week federal unemployment supplement gives recipients less incentive to look for work. Several states have begun requiring those receiving the benefits to show they are actively searching for work, and a few [will stop providing the supplement](#).

But Heidi Shierholz, a senior economist who researches low- and middle-income workers with the Economic Policy Institute, said health concerns and child care responsibilities seem to be the main reasons holding workers back.

[Read more here.](#) —Associated Press

11:14 a.m.: It’s official: Lollapalooza returning in 2021

Lollapalooza will return to Grant Park at full capacity July 29-Aug. 1, organizers announced Tuesday. The lineup will be revealed at 10 a.m. Wednesday, with tickets going on sale at noon at www.lollapalooza.com.

Lollapalooza typically welcomes 100,000 daily attendees to see more than 170 acts perform across eight stages. This year, proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or negative COVID-19 test results will be required to attend. For patrons who are not fully vaccinated, a negative COVID-19 test result must be obtained the day before entry. Organizers said they will detail the festival entry process in early July.

[Read more here.](#) —Tracy Swartz

10:10 a.m.: Navy Pier announces full reopening Thursday, plus summer programs and fireworks

Navy Pier announced plans for a full reopening this summer, with indoor spaces, retail stores and summer programs gradually joining the outdoor Pier, fireworks shows, businesses and rides that [began reopening April 30](#).

This second phase of reopening for Navy Pier, the indoor hallways and spaces will reopen Thursday, with select businesses and retail stores following, according to the Tuesday announcement, “with the goal of being fully open by Memorial Day weekend.” Happy summer news for tourists and Chicagoans unafraid of looking like tourists.

The current fireworks schedule will expand to add Wednesdays, with shows Wednesday at 9:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:15 p.m. through Sept. 4.

Free summer programs also will resume, beginning with Neighborhood Artisan Markets outdoors on May 28, highlighting local artisans and small business owners from across Chicago. Markets will continue through Sept. 5 on the South Dock.

Hours of operation from May 28 through Labor Day will be 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday to Thursday and 10 a.m. to 12 midnight on Friday and Saturday. Parking garage rates will also change from the current flat rate of \$29 to tiered hourly rates.

[Read more here.](#) —Doug George

6:55 a.m.: Cook County brings back one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine to Des Plaines mass vaccination site

Cook County Health was set to resume administering the one-shot Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at its Des Plaines mass vaccination site Tuesday, a week after the health agency expanded hours at five of its 11 vaccination sites.

Officials already were administering the two-shot Pfizer vaccine at the Des Plaines mass vaccination site, 1155 E. Oakton St., according to a news release. The Tinley Park Convention Center site gives out the Johnson & Johnson shot, as well as the two-shot Moderna vaccine.

On May 11, Cook County expanded hours for five its 11 mass vaccination sites, spread across the county.

The Des Plaines site and four others had their hours expanded to 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. on Saturdays. The other four sites, all of which give out the Pfizer vaccine, are:

Matteson, 4647 Promenade Way;

River Grove- Triton College, 2000 5th Ave.;

South Holland- South Suburban College, 15800 State St.;

And Forest Park, 7630 W. Roosevelt Road.

People who visit the Des Plaines site can choose which shot to receive, although only the Pfizer vaccine is approved for children ages 12-17. For more information, check the health agency’s [vaccination website](#). — Chicago Tribune staff

6 a.m.: When COVID-19 hit, study abroad students scrambled to get home. Will those programs resume this year? Some schools say there’s still too much uncertainty.

After delaying the start of college, partly because of the coronavirus pandemic, 19-year-old Claire Noland is certain she'll begin school this fall. She just doesn't know in which country.

Noland, an incoming freshman at New York University, hopes to spend her first two semesters in Italy. But if her study abroad program in Florence falls through due to travel restrictions, she'll have to settle for stateside classes.

"I am trying to prepare myself for the next year of my life," said Noland, who grew up in Elgin and must wait until summer to learn the final status of her program. "That can be somewhat nerve-wracking."

More than a year has passed since study abroad programs screeched to a near-universal halt in the early days of the pandemic, but the fate of the international experiences is still up in the air. Many college students don't know if they should start packing their bags yet, let alone book flights.

And though local universities planned to relaunch programs this fall, some of the most popular study abroad locations — France, Spain and Italy — were recently singled out on the U.S. State Department's "Do Not Travel" list, which could change the outcome.

Loyola University Chicago, Northwestern University and the University of Chicago have announced intentions to resume study abroad in a limited number of countries if health conditions allow. Loyola, for example, aims to reopen a program in Rome but not in Vietnam "due to the complexities of creating and maintaining a safe environment for students."

The state's largest school, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is taking a more conservative approach. It has suspended all study abroad programs through December and is looking to expand virtual international exchange opportunities. The university hopes to resume study abroad in the spring, according to a spokeswoman.

[Read more here.](#) —Elyssa Cherney



National Nurses United urges CDC to reverse mask guidelines

Rob Sneed

May 19, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/national-nurses-united-urges-cdc-to-reverse-mask-guidelines/>

Less than a week after the CDC said fully vaccinated people do not need to wear masks in most settings, a group that represents nurses nationwide is speaking out.

National Nurses United is calling on the CDC to revise their guidelines. They said studies cited by the CDC present data that is “incomplete, not yet peer reviewed, potentially biased, or show poor statistical certainty.”

They held a virtual press Wednesday, saying too many lives could be at risk by not wearing masks.

“We are calling on the CDC to revise this guidance to recommend the multiple measure of infection control that we know work to curb the spread of COVID-19,” NNU’s Lucia Hwang said.

On May 13, the CDC released new guidance that said fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear masks or social distance in most settings.

“I was pretty shocked. One of the ways this virus is so dangerous is that infected people can show mild to no symptoms at all,” said NNU President Zenei Triunfo-Cortez. “And easily transmit the virus in the air to others. This guidance seems to ignore that fact.”

The organization [also said](#) CountyCare registered nurses and social workers claim they’re being put at an unnecessary risk of exposure to COVID-19 by Cook County Health.

Social workers and nurses who have been exposed are calling on Cook County Health to allow them to quarantine at home.

National Nurses United suggests people wear masks, social distance and isolated if you’ve been exposed to the virus.

On Wednesday, Illinois [reported](#) 1,633 new cases COVID-19 and 28 deaths.



COVID-19 nurses to Cook County: 'We want to get paid'

Andrew Schroedter and Lourdes Duarte

May 19, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/wgn-investigates/covid-19-nurses-to-cook-county-we-want-to-get-paid/>

They've been on the frontlines of the [coronavirus pandemic](#) and helping Cook County vaccinate thousands of people.

Now some nurses say they're fighting to get paid.

Laura Skeggs spent four decades in nursing before retiring in January. She planned to spend more time traveling and being with family.

But then the pandemic hit.

In February, she answered the call and came out of retirement. She signed a contract with Cook County to help administer COVID-19 vaccines.

She worked up to 30 hours a week at county run clinic in Arlington Heights. But in the more than three months she was there, she said she didn't receive a single check.

"We don't really feel very respected, not getting paid," Skeggs said. "I'm a professional. I've never been treated like this in my 45 years of nursing."

It turns out she wasn't alone. Skeggs said she knows of several others who are waiting for their money.

One of them, Rochelle Mathew, told WGN Investigates she's owed more than \$41,000 for work dating back to February.

"I know when I spoke with the administration before they said it would take a month and I understand that," Mathews said. "But it's been longer and every time we talk about it, [they say] we have to get your purchase order signed. It's always something like that."

WGN Investigates confirmed with Cook County Health that this has, in fact, been happening.

"We are aware of a processing error that impacted payments to a small number of independent contractor nurses," a spokeswoman said in an email. "This issue has been addressed. Some checks have already been mailed. Checks for any outstanding payments will be cut and mailed early next week."

Skeggs resigned because of non-payment. After our interview, she said she received a \$16,000 check from the county but is still owed more.

Meanwhile, Mathews is still waiting and trying to hang on.

"I was trying to give them a chance but how long do you wait?" she said.

How Illinois would administer COVID-19 booster shots

Jake Griffin

May 21, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210520/how-illinois-would-administer-covid-19-booster-shots>

Illinois public health officials say "if or when booster doses" of the COVID-19 vaccine are recommended, the rollout probably won't involve mass vaccination sites or daylong clinics at large venues.

"We have developed a robust vaccine delivery system to deliver the current COVID-19 vaccines, including doctors' offices and smaller medical providers, and that will be the blueprint if or when booster doses are recommended," said Melaney Arnold, spokeswoman for the Illinois Department of Public Health. "Pharmacies and other providers have current systems to deliver vaccines routinely, like annual flu shots."

The prospect of COVID-19 vaccine booster shots was raised again Wednesday by Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and lead medical adviser to the White House on the nation's COVID-19 response.

"We know that the vaccine durability of the efficacy lasts at least six months, and likely considerably more, but I think we will almost certainly require a booster sometime within a year or so after getting the primary," [Fauci told CNN](#).

While preliminary research shows COVID-19 vaccines provide enough antibodies to remain effective against the virus through the first six months after inoculation, there was a reduction in the amount of antibodies in most people in those studies, public health officials said.

It will be several more months before researchers can conduct tests on those individuals who participated in the initial vaccine trials to learn how well their systems retained antibodies for an entire year. In the absence of that data, a booster shot seems likely, some believe.

"It is likely that booster shots will be necessary, most likely beginning in the fall," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, colead of the Cook County Department of Public Health. "There are a number of unknowns, but as spring and summer progress, we should learn more about what will be necessary and how those booster shots can and will be administered."

The first doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine in Illinois were administered Dec. 15, 2020 -- five months ago.

Medical experts have suspected that due to the ability of the virus to mutate quickly, an annual booster shot for COVID-19 may be necessary similar to influenza. Variants have become the predominant strain of infection in most states.

The U.K. variant is most predominant in Illinois with 4,891 confirmed infections. The Brazil variant, also known as P.1, has also been confirmed in 1,795 cases diagnosed in Illinois. So far, the vaccines have shown efficacy against variants, [research has shown](#).

Public health officials have urged everyone to get vaccinated to avoid variants breaking through the vaccine efficacy. Having more people who are vaccinated lowers the ability of the virus to infect someone and mutate in a way that renders the vaccine ineffective.

"The good news is that the vaccines have been durable at least through six months," said Dr. Jonathan Pinsky, medical director of infection control and prevention at Edward Hospital in Naperville. "A lot remains unknown about the duration of immunity after vaccination, though."



Social Media Dashboard

Insights and Activity Report

April 24 – May 21, 2021



COOK COUNTY
HEALTH

Social Media Summary

April – May Activity

During April 24 – May 21, the communications team posted content on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn for Cook County Health.

Posts included content such as COVID-19, interviews with local media, recognition for physicians and the hospital, and health tips.

Facebook – 44 posts

<https://www.facebook.com/Cookcountyhhs/>

Instagram – 32 posts + 9 stories

<https://www.instagram.com/cookcountyhealth/>

Twitter – 38 (includes retweets)

<https://twitter.com/CookCtyHealth>

LinkedIn – 10 posts

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/cook-county-health/>

Social Media Insights

As of May 21

Twitter (28-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **89.1** (up **6.8%**)
- Profile visits: **3,056**
- Mentions: **83**
- Followers: **4,028** (up **23**)

LinkedIn (30-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **15.8K**
- Unique visitors: **540** (up **12%**)
- Followers: **6,615** (up **93**)

Facebook (28-Day Summary)

- Post reach: **867K** (up **30%**)
- Post engagement: **24.2K** (up **122%**)
- Page views: **55.7K** (up **183%**)
- Page likes: **5,576** (up **272**)
- Page followers: **7,234** (up **294**)

Instagram (30-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **19.3K** (up **64.7%**)
- Reach: **1,686** (up **11.6%**)
- Profile visits: **601** (up **6.5%**)
- Followers: **2,395** (up **16**)

Top Social Media Posts

March 23 – April 23



COOK COUNTY
HEALTH

Top Social Media Posts: Facebook

Post Performance

- Reach: **130.5K**
- Reactions, comments and shares: **581**

Performance for Your Post

130,490 People Reached

581 Reactions, Comments & Shares

257 Like	203 On Post	54 On Shares
23 Love	23 On Post	0 On Shares
4 Haha	4 On Post	0 On Shares
41 Comments	33 On Post	8 On Shares
257 Shares	257 On Post	0 On Shares

10,440 Post Clicks

6,157 Photo Views	474 Link Clicks	3,809 Other Clicks
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NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

0 Hide Post	0 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

Top Social Media Posts: Facebook

Post Performance

- Reach: **3.1K**
- Reactions, comments and shares: **241**

Cook County Health May 3

At last week's board meeting, nurse Anu Thomas was recognized as this quarter's DAISY Foundation award winner. Ms. Thomas was nominated by a patient who said, "Nurse Anu's professionalism and personality made me think about how I want to live my life. ... CCH is very lucky to have nurse Anu."
Thank you to Ms. Thomas and all the wonderful CCH nurses who make a difference in the lives of our patients.

3,136 People Reached

241 Reactions, Comments & Shares

149 Like	31 On Post	118 On Shares
23 Love	6 On Post	17 On Shares
2 Wow	0 On Post	2 On Shares
64 Comments	8 On Post	56 On Shares
5 Shares	5 On Post	0 On Shares

468 Post Clicks

159 Photo Views	0 Link Clicks	309 Other Clicks
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NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

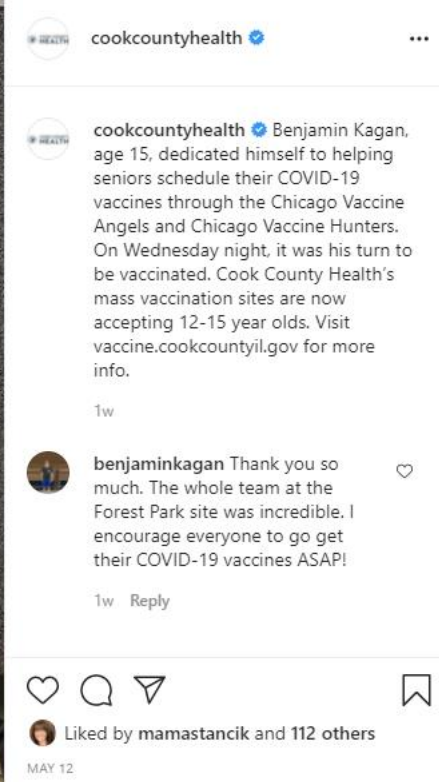
0 Hide Post	1 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

Top Social Media Posts: Instagram

Post Performance

- Impressions: **1,184**
- Reach: **926**
- Profile visits from post: **10**



Top Social Media Posts: Instagram

Post Performance

- Impressions: **654**
- Interactions: **140**
- Profile visits from post: **10**

The graphic is a dark blue rectangle with white and light blue text. At the top left, it says 'COVID-19 COMMUNITY VACCINATION PROGRAM' with a small icon. To the right are logos for 'COOK COUNTY HEALTH', 'COOK COUNTY GOVERNMENT', and 'Cook County Public Health'. The main text reads 'COVID-19 VACCINATIONS WALK-INS WELCOME' in large, bold, white letters. Below this, it says 'WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21 - SATURDAY, APRIL 24' and '8:30AM - 5:00PM'. There are two columns of information: the left column is for 'AGE 18+' with the Moderna logo and 'TINLEY PARK CONVENTION CENTER' at '18451 CONVENTION CENTER DR. TINLEY PARK, IL'; the right column is for 'AGE 16+' with the Pfizer logo and 'MATTESON COMMUNITY VACCINATION SITE (FORMER TARGET STORE)' at '4647 PROMENADE WAY MATTESON, IL'. At the bottom, it says 'NO APPOINTMENT IS NEEDED.' There is a right-pointing arrow on the right side of the graphic.

The screenshot shows the Instagram post interface. At the top is the profile picture and name 'cookcountyhealth'. The caption reads: 'ICYMI: Cook County Health is welcoming walk-ins at the Tinley Park and Matteson mass vaccination sites now through Saturday. The sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. now through Saturday for walk-ins and those with appointments. The Tinley Park site at 18451 Convention Center Drive has a supply of Moderna vaccine. The Matteson site at 4647 Promenade Way has a supply of Pfizer vaccine. Individuals or groups who are interested in getting a vaccine can simply show up with photo ID and register onsite. People will not be asked for their insurance information, immigration status or to pay. The'. At the bottom are icons for heart, comment, share, and bookmark.

Top Social Media Posts: Twitter

Post Performance

- Impressions: **24.2K**
- Total engagements: **333**

Cook County Health
@CookCityHealth

Walk-in COVID-19 vaccines are available for ages 12+ at Cook County Health’s mass vaccination sites – now with extended hours at all Pfizer sites!

Appointments can still be made at myshotcookcounty.com.

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS WALK-INS WELCOME

BY APPOINTMENT OR WALK-IN.
Appointments can be made at myshotcookcounty.com or by calling 855-308-1988.
Last walk-in accepted 30 minutes prior to close.
Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Vaccinations are free, regardless of insurance or immigration status. Hours subject to change.

Monday–Friday	8AM – 8PM	Saturday	8AM – 6PM
12+		DES PLAINES (FORMER KMART) 1155 E. OAKTON ST., DES PLAINES, IL	
12+		FOREST PARK (FORMER HOBO) 7100 W. ROOSEVELT RD., FOREST PARK, IL	
12+		MATTESON (FORMER TARGET STORE) 4647 PROMENADE MAY, MATTESON, IL	
12+		SOUTH SUBURBAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE 15800 STATE ST., SOUTH HOLLAND, IL	
12+		TRITON COMMUNITY COLLEGE 2000 9TH AVE., RIVER GROVE, IL	

Monday–Saturday 8:30AM – 5PM

VACUNAS COVID-19 BIENVENIDOS SIN CITA PREVIA.

CON CITA O SIN CITA
Las citas se pueden hacer en myshotcookcounty.com o llamando al 855-308-1988.
La última cita es aceptada 30 minutos antes del cierre del sitio de vacunación.
Los niños menores de 18 años deben estar acompañados por un padre o tutor. Las vacunas son gratuitas, independientemente del seguro médico o estatus migratorio. Horarios sujetos a cambios.

Lunes a Viernes de	8AM a 8PM	Sábado	8AM a 6PM
12+		DES PLAINES (ANTIGUA TIENDA DE KMART) 1155 E. OAKTON ST., DES PLAINES, IL	
12+		FOREST PARK (ANTIGUA TIENDA DE HOBO) 7100 W. ROOSEVELT RD., FOREST PARK, IL	
12+		MATTESON (ANTIGUA TIENDA DE TARGET) 4647 PROMENADE MAY, MATTESON, IL	
12+		SOUTH SUBURBAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE 15800 STATE ST., SOUTH HOLLAND, IL	
12+		TRITON COMMUNITY COLLEGE 2000 9TH AVE., RIVER GROVE, IL	

Lunes a Sábado 8:30AM a 5PM

TINLEY PARK

Top Social Media Posts: Twitter

Post Performance

- Impressions: **17.1K**
- Total engagements: **242**

Cook County Health @CookCtyHealth · May 18

Beginning today, CCH will also distribute the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at its Des Plaines site.

You will have a choice between the Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

As a reminder, the Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine approved for individuals under age 18.

The screenshot shows a Twitter post from Cook County Health (@CookCtyHealth) dated May 18. The post contains two side-by-side informational graphics for COVID-19 vaccinations. The left graphic is titled 'COVID-19 VACCINATIONS WALK-INS WELCOME' and lists various locations and their hours. The right graphic is titled 'VACUNAS COVID-19 BIENVENIDOS SIN CITA PREVIA' and provides the same information in Spanish. Both graphics include details about appointment and walk-in options, and list several locations such as Des Plaines (Former Kmart), Forest Park (Former Hobo), Matteson (Former Target Store), South Suburban Community College, and Triton Community College. The Twitter interface shows 1 reply, 12 retweets, and 10 likes.

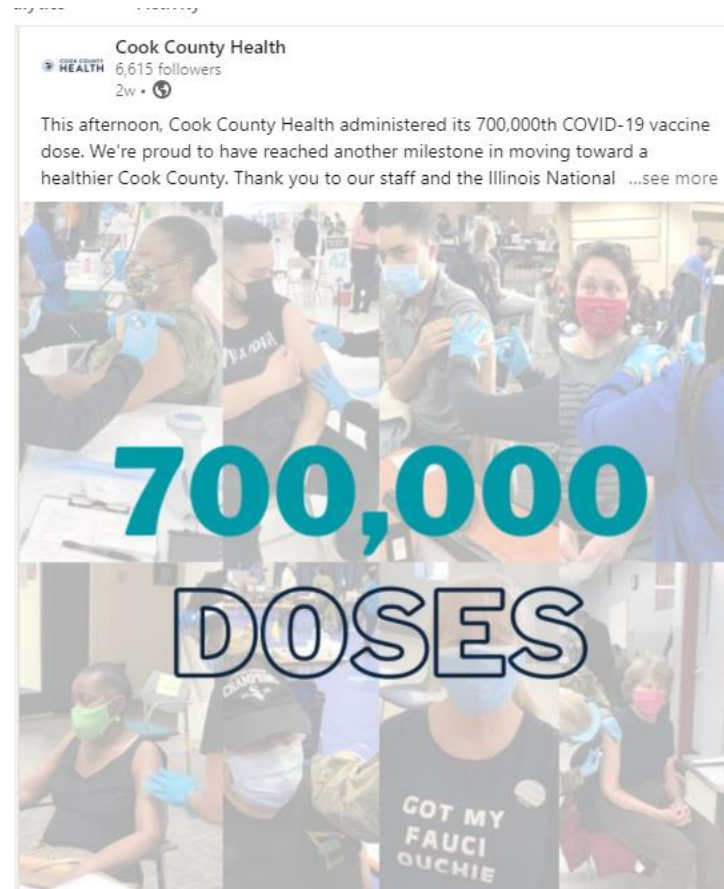
Day	Hours	Location	Vaccine
Monday-Friday	8AM - 8PM	DES PLAINES (FORMER KMART)	Pfizer
Saturday	8AM - 6PM	DES PLAINES (FORMER KMART)	Johnson & Johnson
		DES PLAINES (FORMER KMART)	Pfizer
		FOREST PARK (FORMER HOBO)	Pfizer
		MATTESON (FORMER TARGET STORE)	Pfizer
		SOUTH SUBURBAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Pfizer
		TRITON COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Pfizer

Day	Hours	Location	Vaccine
Lunes a Viernes	8AM a 8PM	DES PLAINES (ANTIGUA TIENDA DE KMART)	Pfizer
Sábado	8AM a 6PM	DES PLAINES (ANTIGUA TIENDA DE KMART)	Johnson & Johnson
		DES PLAINES (ANTIGUA TIENDA DE KMART)	Pfizer
		FOREST PARK (ANTIGUA TIENDA DE HOBO)	Pfizer
		MATTESON (ANTIGUA TIENDA DE TARGET)	Pfizer
		SOUTH SUBURBAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Pfizer
		TRITON COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Pfizer

Top Social Media Posts: LinkedIn

Post Performance

- Impressions: **2,967**
- Clicks: **43**
- Reactions: **79**



Top Social Media Posts: LinkedIn

Post Performance

- Impressions: **2,172**
- Clicks: **61**
- Reactions: **45**

Cook County Health
6,615 followers
4d • 🌐

Dr. Paul Severin was recognized yesterday by the [Illinois Department of Public Health \(IDPH\)](#)'s Illinois Emergency Medical Services for Children with the Ron W. Lee, MD – Excellence in Pediatric Care Award. Among the many initiati ...see more



👍 🎉 🌟 45 • 2 comments

👍 Like 💬 Comment