

The State of Our Children: COVID-19 and Kids



January 14, 2022

A new year has brought a new COVID-19 variant facing all of us and, of particular concern, our kids. As we enter year three of this pandemic, increased positivity rates across all age groups have resulted in staff shortages among various sectors, including healthcare and education, causing a significant strain on resources children depend on. Despite the immense progress made with COVID-19 vaccines, we are paying close attention to children under the age of 5 who do not have protection from this virus – their health depends on the community that surrounds them.

This is the state of our children for January 14, 2022.

Omicron and Kids

Dr. Nael Mhaissen, Valley Children's Medical Director of Pediatric Infectious Diseases

The new year sparked a dramatic spike in COVID-19 positivity rates due to the highly transmissible Omicron variant. The surge that began on the East Coast has now hit the Valley, along with our seasonal RSV and flu outbreaks. It is interesting to note that our RSV and flu numbers were very low last winter, likely due to all of the precautions in place for COVID-19. However, this recent spike in RSV/flu cases that began in October continues to grow, and is markedly higher as people have returned to work, school, large gatherings and more.

The Omicron variant in kids presents itself very similar to other variants with common symptoms including sore throat, runny nose, fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, muscle or body aches, nausea or diarrhea. While symptoms can be milder in children and commonly mistaken for a cold or flu, the only way to be certain is to take a COVID-19 test.

Consistent with national trends, Valley Children's data reflects a significant spike in positive cases and hospitalizations of children after the holiday, and we expect this will continue to climb throughout January. While there is still much to learn about Omicron, we do know that mutations are in an area of the spike protein that makes it more transmissible and may evade some of the therapeutics currently available, including monoclonal antibody treatments.

We will continue to adapt to the impacts of the changing pandemic, while remaining vigilant of hospital capacity, staffing, supplies and the effects this variant has on children who are not yet eligible for protection.

Weekly Data and Trends Across Valley Children's Healthcare Network (ages 0-20)

(as of January 10, 2022)

	Tests Administered	Positive Tests	Positivity Rate	Hospitalizations
Week of Jan. 3	▲ 1,465	▲ 281 (181*)	▲ 19.2%	▲ 11
Week of Dec. 27	891	62 (55*)	7%	4
Week of Dec. 20	1,015	28 (19*)	2.8%	5
Week of Dec. 13	1,056	17 (12*)	1.6%	3
Week of Dec. 6	1,070	23 (13*)	2.1%	2

*COVID+ patients in Valley Children's Emergency Department

COVID-19 Vaccine

Valley Children's has administered 4,389 doses of the Pfizer vaccine to children between the ages of 5-11, since its authorization in October. Among this group, there have been no reports of serious adverse events. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved the Pfizer booster vaccine for kids 12 and older, which is great news for added protection of kids in that age group.

Completion of the vaccine series is recommended. Vaccinations have proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), and to prevent hospitalization and death. Visit [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov) to schedule an appointment or to find a COVID-19 vaccine clinic, including those held at Valley Children's Hospital. Other resources include your local pharmacy, health clinic or county health department.

Who Can Get a Booster Dose?

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is FDA-authorized for children 5-15 and FDA-approved for those 16 and older, while Moderna and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen is FDA-authorized for adults 18 and older. With much discussion surrounding who should get a booster, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has outlined guidance noted below (updated Jan. 6, 2022).

If you received:	Who should get a Booster:	When to get a Booster:	Which Booster you can get:
Pfizer-BioNTech	Everyone 12 years and older	At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series	Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most situations Teens 12-17 years old may only get a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster
Moderna	Adults 18 years and older	At least 6 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series	Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most situations
Johnson & Johnson's Janssen	Adults 18 years and older	At least 2 months after receiving your J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccination	Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most situations

Source:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Jan. 6, 2022). Covid-19 vaccine booster shots. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>

WEAR A MASK • WASH/SANITIZE HANDS • GET VACCINATED



For more information visit valleychildrens.org/covid19 or email contactus@valleychildrens.org