

The State of Our Children: COVID-19 and Kids

September 30, 2022



As children across the Valley settle into their back-to-school routines, we know that there are a lot of issues on the minds of our healthcare partners, families and children. They range from COVID-19 and keeping up with routine immunizations, to anxiety for some as they return to the classrooms and face the societal stresses of today.

This is the state of our children for September 30, 2022.

Keeping COVID-19 under control

In alignment with the American Academy of Pediatrics, Valley Children's recommends COVID-19 vaccinations for everyone 6 months and older. Children should get fully immunized as soon as they are eligible. Keep children and teens home from school if they are sick or show new symptoms, and continue to emphasize handwashing. Although not required in many places, indoor masking is still a good idea, especially for those who are ineligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, are unvaccinated or immunocompromised, if a family member is at high risk or you live in a community with "high" COVID-19 transmission.

Stay up to date on immunizations

The single most effective way to protect our children as they return to school is to ensure they are up to date on all of their immunizations. We have seen a decline in vaccination rates nationally and are concerned about potential outbreaks of life-threatening diseases. A recent case of polio reported in New York reminds us that we cannot let our guards down. We also know that people vaccinated against viruses such as COVID-19 and influenza (flu) are much less likely to have a severe illness or be hospitalized if they do get sick, compared with those who are unvaccinated.

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month which serves as a reminder to let kids know it is ok to talk about how they're feeling and to remain alert for changes in behavior or signs of anxiety or distress - at home, at school or when they make contact with a physician.

Teen suicide has become a focus in conversations here in the Valley and across the country. According to a 2019 study by the Centers Disease for Control and Prevention (CDC), 37%, or more than 1 in 3, high school students reported experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. 19% - nearly 1 in 5 of the students surveyed - said they'd seriously considered attempting suicide. 16% reported making a suicide plan; 9% attempted suicide.

For LGBTQ youth, these numbers are even higher: according to the Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey, 61% of LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of depression; nearly 50% reported seriously considering attempting suicide in the past year, and 18% made an actual suicide attempt - double the rate of U.S. teens altogether.

Reach out to families who may be unsure as to how to even begin to talk about mental health with their children. Pediatricians, school-based behavioral health clinicians and teachers are all sources of support. Also available is the 988 Lifeline, a national network of more than 200 local, independent crisis centers equipped to help people in mental health-related distress or experiencing a suicidal crisis via call, chat or text. The 988 Lifeline provides free and confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the U.S.

For more on warning signs to watch out for and how to talk to kids, visit valleychildrens.org/mentalhealth or [watch a video on suicide prevention featuring Valley Children's Primary Care Physician Dr. Finnian Steele.](#)

Resources for More Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention • www.cdc.gov 
Food & Drug Administration • www.fda.gov 

American Academy of Pediatrics • www.aap.org 
Valley Children's COVID-19 Center • valleychildrens.org/covid19 

Current COVID-19 data and trends across the Valley Children's Healthcare network (ages 0-20)

(as of September 19, 2022)

	Tests Administered	Positive Tests	Positivity Rate	Hospitalizations
Sept 12 - Sept 18	▲ 508	▼ 22 (10*)	▼ 4.0%	▲ 3
Sept 5 - Sept 11	316	44 (37*)	14.0%	1
August 29 - Sept 4	554	90 (71*)	16.2%	4
Aug 22 - Aug 28	605	114 (91*)	19.8%	6
Aug 15 - Aug 21	665	102 (84*)	15.3%	2
Aug 8 - Aug 14	756	170 (133*)	22.5%	0
Aug 1 - Aug 7	760	172 (134*)	22.6%	2
July 25 - July 31	824	194 (163*)	23.5%	1
July 18 - July 24	1,006	198 (176*)	19.7%	3
July 11 - July 17	899	153 (145*)	17.0%	1

*COVID+ patients in Valley Children's Emergency Department

References:

American Academy of Pediatrics. *Back to school: Tips to help kids have a healthy year*. HealthyChildren.org. (n.d.). Retrieved September 19, 2022, from <https://healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/school/Pages/back-to-school-tips-to-help-kids-have-a-healthy-year.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, October 27). *Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS)*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved September 19, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>

The Trevor Project. *2022 national survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 19, 2022, from <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>

WEAR A MASK • WASH/SANITIZE HANDS • GET VACCINATED

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