

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

COVID-19 Activity is Increasing, Take Steps to Protect Yourself This Summer and Fall

CDPH encourages Californians to stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccines as infections rise statewide

What You Need to Know: COVID-19 infections are increasing across California. Staying up to date on the COVID-19 vaccine reduces the risk of serious illness and helps prevent sick days.

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is encouraging all Californians to get vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones from COVID-19. Summer and fall increases in COVID-19 activity have occurred yearly since 2020, creating an expected surge of activity during this time. As [COVID-19 activity increases](#), CDPH continues to recommend getting immunized against this disease. It has been proven safe and effective in preventing serious illness and death in children and adults.

"As COVID-19 activity rises each summer, and our kids are getting back to school, getting vaccinated is one of the strongest ways we can protect our families and keep our communities thriving," said **Dr. Erica Pan, CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer**. "By staying up to date on your vaccine, you're choosing health, resilience, and the freedom to enjoy the season with confidence."

For renewed protection against severe illness, hospitalization and death, all Californians 6 months and older should be protected with the COVID-19 vaccine, with an emphasis on protecting higher risk individuals, such as infants and toddlers, pregnant individuals and others with risks for serious disease.

Getting vaccinated can minimize symptoms if infections occur, allowing Californians to return to daily activities more quickly.

Recommendations

- Everyone 6 months and older should have access to and the choice to receive available COVID-19 vaccines.
- CDPH recommends that anyone who hasn't received a dose of 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine or is due for a 2nd dose get vaccinated now as we're seeing increases in infections now.
- Some groups (young children, immunocompromised people) may need multiple doses.
- People 65+ or who are immunocompromised are recommended to receive two available doses 6 months apart.
- Vaccination reduces the risk of serious illness, hospitalization, and death.

CDPH recommends healthcare providers continue to administer the 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine through the summer while awaiting arrival of the 2026-2027 COVID-19 vaccine later this year. For the last two years we've seen higher peaks of COVID-19 disease activity in late summer than in the winter, so it's important to protect now. Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccines are right for you and your family.

Scheduling

COVID-19 vaccines can be administered during the same visit as other vaccines. Schedule a vaccine appointment by visiting [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov), or contacting your local pharmacy or health care provider.

Cost

COVID-19 vaccines will be covered for most people through their health insurance plans, including Medi-Cal and regular health care providers. Those having difficulty obtaining vaccines can contact their health care provider or [local health department](#) to locate a provider.

The [Vaccines For Children \(VFC\)](#) program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children (18 and younger) who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of an inability to pay. Contact your doctor to learn if they are enrolled in VFC or visit [MyTurn](#) find a location based on your eligibility.

Additional Layers of Virus Prevention

In addition to vaccines, CDPH recommends the following actions to prevent viruses from spreading:

- **Stay Home When Sick:** Staying home when you're sick prevents the spread of COVID-19, flu, RSV and even the common cold.
- **Wear a mask:** Wear a quality mask, such as a N95 or KN95. Masks are especially helpful if you are high-risk, or in a crowded space, or are indoors. Wash your hands: Wash hands throughout the day with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Infection can spread if you touch something contaminated and then touch your face before washing your hands.
- **Cover your cough or sneeze:** Cough or sneeze into your elbow, arm or a tissue. Make sure to throw away your tissue. Then wash or sanitize your hands.
- **Bring in fresh air:** If it is safe to do so, open doors and windows to bring in fresh outdoor air. This prevents virus particles from building up indoors.

Are you already feeling sick?

Go to the ["I am feeling sick"](#) page to learn more about symptoms and treatment. Treatments work best when they are started right after symptoms begin.

Get more information about respiratory virus prevention by visiting [CDPH's Respiratory Virus Hub](#).