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COVID-19 Update: Vaccination and Boosters Now Available to More People

FDA Grants Emergency Use Authorization for Two-10mcg-Dose Pfizer-BioNTech Course for Children 5-11
Lake County, CA (October 29, 2021) – Overall, we continue to see some modest improvements in Lake County’s COVID statistics. However, our Case Rate of 19.6/100,000 remains greater than 1.5 times the statewide average (12.2/100,000). This is higher than any period of the pandemic outside of the 2020-21 winter surge and our summer surge resulting from the Delta Variant. Our test positivity is at 6.1%, more than twice the statewide rate (2.8%). 106 Lake County residents have died due to COVID-related illness, 40.6% of those (43) since July 1.

Despite the relative prevalence of COVID-19 in Lake County’s communities, and greater risks faced by those that are unprotected, our vaccination rates trail statewide numbers. 62% of Lake County residents are fully vaccinated, and 8% are partially vaccinated. 72.9% of all Californians are fully vaccinated, and 80.7% have received at least one dose:

http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Coronavirus/COVID-19_Data.htm
<https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccination-progress-data/>

COVID-19 Vaccination Remains Highly Protective Against Severe Illness, Hospitalization and Death

August CDC vaccine effectiveness data showed unvaccinated U.S. residents were 6.1 times more likely to test positive for COVID-19, and 11.3 times more likely to die of COVID-related illness. State data from late September-mid October shows unvaccinated Californians have recently been 6.9 times more likely to contract the virus, 9.9 times more likely to be hospitalized and 15 times more likely to die of COVID-related illness:

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#rates-by-vaccine-status>
<https://covid19.ca.gov/state-dashboard/>

COVID-19 vaccination and testing are readily available in Lake County, visit:

<http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Coronavirus/Vaccines.htm>; and <http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Coronavirus/Testing.htm>.

How Concerned Should I Be About Vaccine Side Effects and Adverse Events?

Some people have specific contra-indications to getting vaccinated, and we encourage people to talk to their treating doctors if they have concerns. However, most documented side effects and adverse effects have been minor. Current data show health risks associated with COVID infection are much greater than risks of adverse vaccine events.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/adverse-events.html>

What About Breakthrough Cases?

No vaccine is 100% effective at preventing illness. Getting vaccinated reduces risks for you and those you come into contact with. Vaccines approved in the U.S. have performed similarly in terms of protection. The rate of vaccinated people getting COVID is similar across all age groups. Death rates are much higher in older or immune compromised people than younger and healthier individuals, even though infection rates are similar.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-departments/breakthrough-cases.html>

Am I Eligible to Get a Booster Shot?

Eligibility and guidance differ based on which vaccine you initially received.

Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna:

- People Age 65+; and
- Individuals 18+, that
 - Reside in a long-term care setting;
 - Have qualifying underlying medical conditions; and/or
 - Work or live in a high-risk setting.
- NOTE: the CDC currently recommends waiting at least 6 months following your second shot.

Johnson & Johnson (Janssen):

- 18+; and
- At least 2 months following your one-shot dose.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>

Do I have to Get the Same Vaccine I Did Before?

No, those eligible to receive a booster can get “any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States.”

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html#choosing-booster>

Children Ages 5-11 Now Eligible to Receive Two 10mcg Doses of Pfizer Vaccine

The United States Food and Drug Administration announced today (10/29) they had authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for emergency use in children ages 5-11. The approved two-dose course employs 10mcg injections, one-third the Pfizer dose administered to individuals 12 or older. A Study is currently underway, and vaccination could be available to children under age 5 as soon as late 2021 or early 2022.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-authorizes-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-use-children-5-through-11-years-age>

We Are All in This Together

This pandemic has been really hard. Please do everything you can to keep your family and community safe. There is a strong possibility that there will be another surge in the coming months. Even when we disagree about the best approach, please remember that we are all in this together.

Gary Pace, MD, MPH

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