

A RESOURCE FOR IMPROVING MEASURABLE IMPACT

Protecting our Children from COVID-19: How Texans can help

Vaccination is the best way to protect our families and prevent or slow the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, wearing masks and social distancing are proven methods to slow the transmission of COVID-19. Because of the emergence of highly contagious variants, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that everyone over the age of two, even if vaccinated, wear a mask indoors in public. (1)

Why should adults and children wear a mask?

- To protect children who are not eligible to be vaccinated from those who might carry the disease.
- To prevent the spread of new COVID-19 variants that are causing a surge in the U.S. and globally. The Delta variant is 200% more transmissible and has 1,000% more virus particles than the original strain of COVID-19, meaning the virus is more easily and quickly spread - especially in crowded, poorly ventilated areas among people who are not vaccinated. (2) **Children and unvaccinated adults are at greatest risk.**
- Although vaccinated people are protected from severe illness and death from COVID-19, they can still spread the virus to others (though at much lower rates). (3)

The only way to stop these emerging variants of COVID-19 is to:

- **Get vaccinated**
- **Wear a mask**
- **Social distance**

1

Since May 12, 2021, children 12 years old and older have been eligible to receive the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine in Texas. (4)

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and have been developed and used under the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history, including studies in children. (5)

- Nearly 13 million, or **54%**, of the eligible population in Texas is fully vaccinated. (6) *Rates of vaccination across cities and counties in Texas are highly variable.*
- To reach population level immunity, **80%-94%** of Texans need to be immune by vaccination or natural infection. (7-8)
- Evidence suggests vaccine immunity is substantially stronger than natural infection. Individuals who are not vaccinated, even those who have previously tested positive for COVID-19, remain at considerable risk for severe outcomes due to new variants of COVID-19.



Most children are not protected from COVID-19.

Nearly 2/3 of Texans ages 5-19 do not have COVID-19 antibodies. (9)



Most children who are eligible for the vaccine are not vaccinated.

Only 26% of Texans ages 12-17 are vaccinated. (10)

As of August 5, 2021, nearly 4.3 million child COVID-19 cases were reported, representing 14.3% of all cases in the U.S. (11)

In the last week of July, 71,798 new child cases of COVID-19 were reported, representing 19% of all reported cases and an **86% increase** compared to the prior week. (11) Many schools are reopening in August, and it is expected that cases will rise even further. In Texas, you can check your county transmission rate here: <https://sph.uth.edu/dept/bads/covid19-dashboard>. (12)

Children can still experience severe outcomes from COVID-19.

Nationwide, as of May 2021, among children and adolescents ages 0-17 years: (13-14)

More than 200,000
had been hospitalized with COVID-19

Nearly 400
had died from COVID-19

Child hospitalizations due to COVID-19 are at an all-time high. (15)

Among adolescents aged 12-17 who were hospitalized with COVID-19, **nearly 1/3** required intensive care unit (ICU) admission. (16)



- In some areas of high and increasing cases, children's hospitals are over capacity because of lack of beds and staff shortages. (17)
- Children may experience Long COVID-19. Estimates suggest **10%-45%** of children under age 12 experience COVID-19 symptoms lasting longer than five weeks. (18-19)
- Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) is a rare but serious disease associated with COVID-19. (20) As of July 30, 2021, there were **4,404** cases of MIS-C and 37 deaths in the U.S. (21)
- Children with underlying health conditions such as **asthma, diabetes, or obesity** and **babies under 1 year old** are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 compared to children without underlying conditions or older than 1 year old. (22-23)
- Children of color are disproportionately impacted by severe outcomes from COVID-19. (14, 24)
- A child is more likely to experience serious symptoms from COVID-19 than from the vaccine. (14)

The vaccine is safe - please protect yourself, your families, and your neighbors.

Children have a right to be safe.

There are nearly 5 million children under the age of 12 in Texas. These children are not yet eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. (25)

- 2.7 million children under age 12 attended Texas public school (K-6th grade) in the 2020-2021 academic school year. (26) Children attending public school in the 2021-2022 school year will likely be exposed to COVID-19 in school settings. This may be exacerbated by the new and highly contagious variants.
- Because children do not have the autonomy to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine, **it is up to the public to protect them** - by getting vaccinated, wearing masks, and social distancing. These preventive actions will protect children by reducing transmission in the community.

Protect our children.

Children belong back in school, among their peers and with their teachers. Take preventive actions.

- **Get vaccinated.** For yourself, for your family, for those around you, for those who cannot get vaccinated.
- Protect young children by wearing a mask, social distancing, and washing your hands regularly - even if you are vaccinated.
- Vaccinate your children if they are age 12 or older, and vaccinate your younger children when the vaccine is approved for their age group.
- Ask those who care for or teach your children to get vaccinated.
- Monitor the projected risk at your child's school here: (28) <https://covid-19.tacc.utexas.edu/dashboards/school-risk/>
- Check your antibody status by participating in Texas CARES: (29) <https://sph.uth.edu/projects/texascares/>

MAY 10, 2021

FDA approves COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 12 and older. (27)

All Texans aged 12 and older eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. (4)

MAY 12, 2021

Child cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. increased by 86% compared to the week prior. (11)

JULY 22-29, 2021

U.S. reaches 4,292,120 reported child cases of COVID-19. (11)

AUGUST 5, 2021

Anticipated availability of COVID-19 vaccine for children under age 12 in the U.S.

LATE FALL, 2021

For resources on where to get a COVID-19 vaccine, see below: (30)

- **COVID-19 Vaccination Hub Providers**
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/immunize/vaccine-hubs.aspx>
- **CDC's Federal Retail Pharmacy Program**
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/retail-pharmacy-program/participating-pharmacies.html>
- **Texas Vaccine Scheduler**
https://getthevaccine.dshs.texas.gov/txces/s/?language=en_US
- **DSHS Summer Pop-Ups**
<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/news/releases/2021/20210722.aspx>

REFERENCES

1. American Academy of Pediatrics Updates Recommendations for Opening Schools in Fall 2021. <https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2021/american-academy-of-pediatrics-updates-recommendations-for-opening-schools-in-fall-2021/>. Published July 19, 2021. Accessed July 19, 2021.
2. Christie A, Brooks JT, & Hicks LA, Sauber-Schatz EK, Yoder JS, & Honein MA. Guidance for Implementing COVID-19 Prevention Strategies in the Context of Varying Community Transmission Levels and Vaccination Coverage. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2021;70:1044–1047. [http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7030e2external icon](http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7030e2external%20icon)
3. When You've Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>. Updated July 27, 2021. Accessed July 27, 2021.
4. Adolescents Ages 12 to 15 Years Now Eligible To Be Vaccinated Against COVID-19. <https://dshs.texas.gov/news/releases/2021/20210512.aspx>. Published May 12, 2021. Accessed August 4, 2021.
5. COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/adolescents.html>. Updated July 23, 2021. Accessed July 23, 2021.
6. COVID-19 Vaccination in Texas. https://tabexternal.dshs.texas.gov/t/THD/views/COVID-19VaccineinTexasDashboard/PeopleVaccinated?%3Aorigin=card_share_link&%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y. Accessed August 10, 2021.
7. World Health Organization. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Herd immunity, lockdowns and COVID-19. <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/herd-immunity-lockdowns-and-covid-19>. Published December 31, 2020. Accessed August 4, 2021.
8. What is Herd Immunity and How Can We Achieve It With COVID-19? <https://www.jhsph.edu/covid-19/articles/achieving-herd-immunity-with-covid19.html>. Updated April 6, 2021. Accessed July 27, 2021.
9. Messiah S, Valerio-Shewmaker MA, DeSantis SM, Swartz MD, Yaseen A, Brito FA, Kohl HW, Kelder SH, Aguillard K, Omega-Njemnobi OS, Breaux C, Ross JA, Gonzales MO, Zhang S, Wu L, Lakey D, Shuford JA, Pont SJ, & Boerwinkle E. Estimated Prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 Antibodies in the Texas Pediatric Population, 2021.
10. DSHS Launches New Round of Pop Up Vaccine Events News Release. <https://dshs.texas.gov/news/releases/2021/20210722.aspx>. Published July 22, 2021. Accessed August 4, 2021.
11. American Academy of Pediatrics Children and COVID-19: State-Level Data Report. <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/children-and-covid-19-state-level-data-report/>. Published July 26, 2021. Accessed August 12, 2021.
12. COVID-19 Dashboard – Test Positivity Rate. <https://sph.uth.edu/dept/bads/covid19-dashboard>. Accessed August 10, 2021.
13. Your Local Epidemiologist. Advocating for kids: Resources that can help. https://yourlocalepidemiologist.substack.com/p/advocating-for-kids-resources-that?fbclid=IwAR3AU6ujZg6rDatJAACAfmvV8ojgiN3A2nStNGc15kOAdrwyJ3VDsIs_POk. Published August 1, 2021. Accessed August 4, 2021.
14. Estimated COVID-19 Burden. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/burden.html>. Updated July 27, 2021. Accessed August 4, 2021.
15. COVID Data Tracker. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#new-hospital-admissions>. Accessed August 10, 2021.
16. Havers FP, Whitaker M, Self JL, Chai SJ, Kirley PD, Alden NB, Kawasaki B, Meek J, Yousey-Hindes K, Anderson EJ, Openo KP, Weigel A, Teno K, Monroe ML, Ryan PA, Reeg L, Kohrman A, Lynfield R, Como-Sabetti K, Poblete M, McMullen C, Muse A, Spina N, Bennett NM, Gaitan M, Billing LM, Schiltz J, Sutton M, Abdullah N, Schaffner W, Talbot HK, Crossland M, George A, Patel K, Pham H, Milucky J, Anglin O, Ujamaa D, Hall AJ, Garg S, & Taylor CA.. Hospitalization of Adolescents Aged 12–17 Years with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 — COVID-NET, 14 States, March 1, 2020–April 24, 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2021;70:851–857. [http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7023e1external icon](http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7023e1external%20icon)

REFERENCES

17. Kids sick with Covid are filling up children's hospitals in areas seeing spikes. <https://nbcnews.com/news/us-news/kids-sick-are-filling-children-s-hospitals-areas-seeing-n1276238>. Updated August 9, 2021. Accessed August 12, 2021.
18. Buonsenso D, Munblit D, De Rose C, Sinatti D, Ricchiuto A, Carfi A, & Valentini P. Preliminary evidence on long COVID in children. *MedRxiv* 2021;110(7), 2208-2211. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/apa.15870>
19. Prevalence of ongoing symptoms following coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in the UK. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/datasets/alldatarelatingtoprevalenceofongoingsymptomsfollowingcoronaviruscovid19infectionintheuk>. Published July 1, 2021.
20. Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19. <https://www.cdc.gov/mis/mis-c.html>. Updated February 24, 2021.
21. Health Department-Reported Cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) in the United States. <https://www.cdc.gov/mis/cases/index.html>. Accessed August 6, 2021.
22. Information for Pediatric Healthcare Providers. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/pediatric-hcp.html>. Updated December 30, 2020. Accessed July 27, 2021.
23. COVID-19: Impact of Childhood Obesity on Health Outcomes. https://sph.uth.edu/research/centers/dell/legislative-initiatives/COVID-19+Child+Obesity+1_20_2021.pdf?language_id=1. Published January 20, 2021.
24. Payne, AB, Gilani Z, Godfred-Cato S, Belay ED, Feldstein LR, Patel MM, Randolph AG, Newhams M, Thomas D, Magleby R, Hsu K, Burns M, Dufort E, Maxted A, Pietrowski M, Longenberger A, Bidol S, Henderson J, Sosa L, Edmundson A, Tobin-D'Angelo M, Edison L, Hiedemann S, Singh AR, Giuliano Jr JS, Kleinman LC, Tarquinio KM, Walsh RF, Fitzgerald JC, Clouser KN, Gertz SJ, Carroll RW, Carroll CL, Hoots BE, Reed C, Dahlgren FS, Oster ME, Pierce TJ, Curns AT, Langley GE, Campbell AP, MIS-C Incidence Authorship Group, Balachandran N, Murray TS, Burkholder C, Brancard T, Lifshitz J, Leach D, Charpie I, Tice C, Coffin SE, Perella D, Jones K, Marohn KL, Yager PH, Ferandes ND, Flori HR, Koncicki ML, Walker KS, di Pentima MC, Li S, Howitz SM, Gaur S, Coffey DC, Harwayne-Gidansky I, Hymes SR, Thomas NJ, Ackerman KG, & Cholette JM.. Incidence of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children Among US Persons Infected With SARS-CoV-2. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2021;4(6) <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2780861>
25. Child population by age group in Texas. 2021. <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6422-child-population-by-age-group#detailed/2/any/false/1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133/1594,2730,2731,179/13318>. Accessed July 27, 2021.
26. Texas Education Agency. Enrollment in Texas Public Schools 2020-21. Division of Research and Analysis Office of Governance and Accountability. <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/enroll-2020-21.pdf>. Published June 2021.
27. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: FDA Authorizes Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for Emergency Use in Adolescents in Another Important Action in Fight Against Pandemic. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-authorizes-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-use>. Published May 10, 2021. Accessed August 4, 2021.
28. The University of Texas COVID-19 Modeling Consortium. Expected number of COVID-19 cases arriving at school. <https://covid-19.tacc.utexas.edu/dashboards/school-risk/>. Accessed August 4, 2021.
29. Texas Coronavirus Antibody REsponse Survey (CARES). <https://sph.uth.edu/projects/texascares/>. Accessed August 4, 2021.
30. COVID-19 Vaccine Information. <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/covidvaccine/>. Updated July 28, 2021. Accessed August 4, 2021.