

COVID-19 BRIEFING

Updates on COVID-19 in Idaho



December 18, 2020

Welcome to the Department of Health and Welfare's bi-weekly briefing on the department's latest news, communications activities, and resources for the pandemic. This briefing will also be posted on the [coronavirus website](#).

COVID-19 VACCINE

The initial shipment of 13,650 doses of Pfizer and BioNTech's ultra-cold COVID-19 vaccine arrived in Idaho this week. Shipments will continue each subsequent week. Learn more about the initial vaccine shipment in DHW's [press release](#).

Healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities are getting the vaccine first in [Phase 1a](#) of the rollout. Healthcare workers started receiving it this week. Residents and staff of long-term care facilities are expected to start getting it the week of Dec. 28.

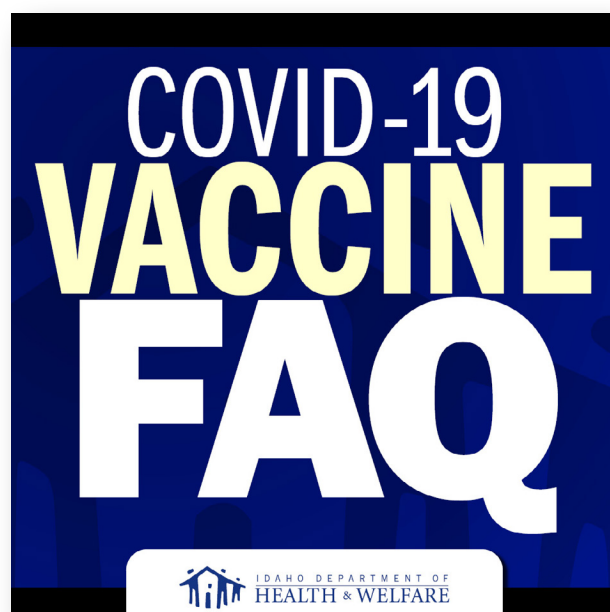
The Idaho COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee (CVAC) has made recommendations on which populations should be prioritized for Phase 1b. The decision will ultimately be made by Gov. Brad Little. CVAC is recommending that Phase 1b of the vaccination plan include critical infrastructure workers not included in Phase 1a. CVAC is recommending the following types of critical infrastructure workers be prioritized for vaccination in Phase 1b in the following order:

- First responders, including fire, police, protective services and community support personnel
- Pre-K-12 school staff and teachers and daycare workers
- Correctional and detention facility staff, except medical staff already in Phase 1a
- Food processing workers
- Grocery and convenience store workers
- Idaho National Guard
- Other critical infrastructure workers not already included and unable to telework or social distance at work

Visit the coronavirus website to see the [list of recommended priority groups](#).

COVID-19 VACCINE FAQ

DHW created a comprehensive [COVID-19 vaccine FAQ](#) on the coronavirus website. The FAQ will be regularly updated as information becomes available.



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IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

IDAHO COVID-19 VACCINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CVAC)

At its next regularly scheduled meeting on Dec. 18, CVAC is set to continue discussing COVID-19 vaccine subgroup prioritizations. This briefing was distributed prior to the meeting, but you can find information about CVAC and its meetings on the [coronavirus website](#).

COVID-19 STATISTICS

DHW is now posting the cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered and reported to the state. As of Dec. 18, 944 vaccine doses have been administered in Idaho. Data will be updated by 10 a.m. daily on the [coronavirus website](#).

As of Dec. 18, there have been 126,878 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and a total of 1,259 COVID-19-related deaths in Idaho. COVID-19 was the number one leading cause of death in Idaho in November and it's now the third leading cause of death in Idaho this year. For more information on those grim milestones see DHW's [press release](#).

Over the past week, the counties seeing the highest COVID-19 infection rates in Idaho include Adams, Lewis, and Kootenai. Those counties have been seeing 7-day moving average incident rates of 116.4, 100.5, and 92.5 per 100,000 people respectively.

Idaho this week reached a statewide COVID-19 testing positivity rate of 16.5%, down from 19.9% the week prior.

COVID-19 statistics can be found at the [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). Case data is updated daily at 5 p.m., hospitalization data is updated Monday, Wednesday and Friday by 5 p.m. and percent positivity testing data is updated by 5 p.m. MT Thursdays.



ONE IDAHO TELEVISION SPOTS

On television and radio over the past couple of weeks have been four ONE Idaho spots featuring real Idahoans speaking about their experiences with COVID-19 and why they choose to wear a mask. The most recent spot features [Steve, a small business owner](#), in Idaho Falls.





GOVERNOR'S ACTIONS

Gov. Brad Little at his most recent press conference on Dec. 10 provided an update on the COVID-19 pandemic in Idaho as well as information about crisis standards of care. For more information about crisis standards of care check out DHW's [Crisis Standards of Care FAQ](#) published on the coronavirus website.

Idaho remains in modified Stage 2 of the Idaho Rebounds reopening plan after Gov. Brad Little's [latest health order](#), announced on Nov. 14. Visit the [Idaho Rebounds plan](#) website for more information.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE (DHW) SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

DHW in recent weeks launched three new social media campaigns, including one about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccine, another highlighting the differences between COVID-19 and the flu, and another encouraging Idahoans to choose to wear masks.

In the coming weeks we'll launch additional campaigns about COVID-19 vaccine as well as ones with recommended guidelines for holiday gatherings as Christmas and New Year's approach amid rising cases. Be sure to follow DHW on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram for the latest.



DHW COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

DHW's [communications toolkit](#) has been updated to include information on how COVID-19 vaccines work, tips on how to find credible vaccine information, resources related to COVID-19 vaccine safety and monitoring, as well as COVID-19 vaccine-related social media tiles.

The toolkit contains additional social media tiles, digital posters, and flyers aimed at keeping Idahoans safe from the spread of COVID-19. The materials are for healthcare providers, businesses, and other interested stakeholders, and they can be branded or adapted for social media campaigns and other forms of outreach. The toolkit will be updated regularly so check back for new content.

COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION ONLINE

There is a new [COVID-19 vaccine section](#) available at [the coronavirus website](#). The section includes some of the above information as well as information about the process to prioritize groups for COVID-19 vaccine, links to COVID-19 vaccine blog posts, and a schedule of meeting dates for the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) as well as Idaho's COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee (CVAC).

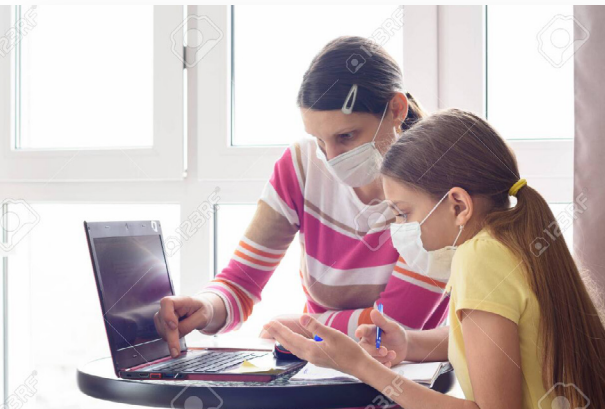
There is also a link available with [Resources for COVID-19 vaccine providers](#).

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SCHOOLS

The summary of COVID-19 cases associated with schools in Idaho at the [coronavirus website](#) is published on Mondays under the [“Schools” tab](#).

LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

The summary of COVID-19 cases associated with long-term care facilities in Idaho at the [coronavirus website](#) is published on Fridays under the [“Long-Term Care” tab](#).

CRISIS STANDARDS OF CARE

At an emergency meeting Dec. 11, the Board of DHW approved a [temporary administrative rule](#) that allows for the timely activation of crisis standards of care during a pandemic, natural disaster, or other emergency that is overwhelming Idaho’s healthcare system.

Crisis standards of care are guidelines that help healthcare providers and healthcare systems decide how to deliver the best care possible under the extraordinary circumstances of a disaster.

For more information about crisis standards of care, visit DHW’s [FAQ](#) and [read the press release](#) from DHW after the meeting.

DHW BLOG

The [DHW blog](#) features a new blog twice a week. The latest one is a Q&A on COVID-19 vaccine in Idaho.

COVID-19 HELP NOW PHONE LINE

The COVID Help Now phone and text line is available for anyone in need of emotional support. Call or text 986-867-1073 or toll free at 866-947-5186. Since it opened in August 2020, the line has answered more than 1,100 contacts from Idahoans reaching out for help.



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DHWVoice

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INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR ISOLATION FOR COVID-19

DHW posted new [interim guidelines](#) for isolation for COVID-19. Instead of the 14-day quarantine previously recommended, those potentially exposed to COVID-19 can now quarantine 10 or 7 days depending on test results and symptoms.

BUSTING COVID-19 MYTHS

MYTH: COVID-19 is the same as the flu.

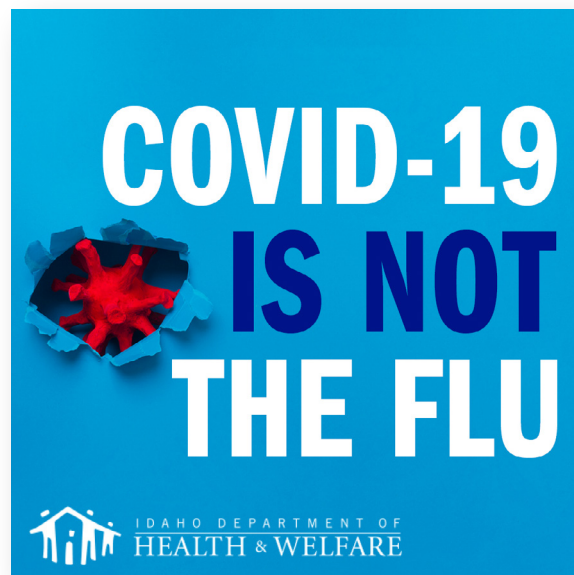
FACT: COVID-19 is not the flu. The illnesses are caused by different viruses that impact the body differently. COVID-19 seems to spread more easily than flu and can cause more serious illnesses in unexpected ways. COVID-19 is also much deadlier than flu. COVID-19 was the number one leading cause of death in Idaho in November and it's now the third leading cause of death in Idaho this year. Flu has killed 3 people in Idaho this season.

MYTH: The COVID-19 vaccine can give you COVID-19.

FACT: The COVID-19 vaccine will not give you COVID-19. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the U.S. use the live virus that causes COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development. However, the goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and become infected. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection against the virus

COMMUNICATIONS FORUM

DHW's Office of Communications in partnership with Gov. Brad Little's communications director created a forum for communications professionals in state agencies, health districts, healthcare agencies and facilities as well as stakeholders to meet every other Monday to discuss COVID-19-related communications efforts and strategies. The next meeting is on Dec. 21. If you'd like to join send an email to communications@dhw.idaho.gov.



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