

COVID-19 BRIEFING

Updates on COVID-19 in Idaho



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

March 26, 2021

Welcome to the Department of Health and Welfare's bi-weekly briefing on the department's latest news, communications activities, and resources for the COVID-19 pandemic. New in this edition of the briefing are new COVID-19 vaccine eligibility dates, a revamped COVID-19 Vaccine Data Dashboard, and the state's new ad campaign aimed at increasing vaccine confidence, and more. New sections are marked **"NEW"** and all other sections are up-to-date as of the time of publishing.



COVID-19 VACCINE ELIGIBILITY

Gov. Brad Little this week announced all Idahoans 16 years of age or older can access COVID-19 vaccine starting April 5. Starting March 29, any Idahoan 16 years of age or older with at least one medical condition can access the COVID-19 vaccine. See a [press release](#) and [DHW's website](#) for more information.

COVID-19 VACCINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CVAC)

CVAC held its final scheduled meeting on March 19 and cast several votes that have since been approved by Gov. Little. CVAC voted to make all people living in congregate living settings eligible for vaccine now as part of Group 3 regardless of age or medical condition. CVAC also voted to reject requests to prioritize several types of workers for vaccine. See a [press release](#) for more information.



VACCINE CONFIDENCE TV SPOTS

The state has produced six ads aimed at promoting COVID-19 vaccine confidence by focusing on safety and efficacy. The ads, which began airing on TV this week, feature DHW's Dr. Christine Hahn, Boise-based physician Dr. Aaron Campbell, and a working mom and dad in Idaho. The first of the six commercials has been uploaded to [YouTube](#).



REVAMPED COVID-19 VACCINE DATA DASHBOARD

The [COVID-19 Vaccine Data Dashboard](#) has been revamped. It now includes new information about pre-registrations for COVID-19 vaccine appointments, an interactive tool that shows how long it will take to vaccinate 60 percent of Idaho's age 16+ population, vaccination rates by age groups, as well as Idaho vaccine data versus national data, among other additions. The dashboard will be updated daily at 5 p.m. but not on weekends.

BRIEFING

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COVID-19 SUPPORT GROUP

DHW in conjunction with Empower Idaho, is offering a series of virtual, interactive support groups for all Idahoans interested in learning how to cope with the challenges and stress of a year of COVID-19. The group will meet every other Tuesday starting [March 23](#) at 12:30 p.m. MDT (11:30 a.m. PDT) for up to an hour. [Registration is required](#). The series will end on June 29. See the [press release](#) for more information.

STATEWIDE COVID-19 VACCINE PRE-REGISTRATION SYSTEM

The pre-registration system allows Idahoans to add their names to one waiting list regardless of when they are eligible to get the vaccine. They will be contacted by an enrolled COVID-19 vaccine provider when it is their turn and when the provider has appointments and vaccine available.

As of March 25, nearly 99,000 Idahoans have signed up on the pre-registration system and close to 40,000 of them have been contacted by a provider for a vaccine appointment.

See a [press release](#) for more information.



COVID-19 STATISTICS



Idaho is now receiving about 52,000 first doses of COVID-19 vaccine each week, not counting the doses allocated via the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 Vaccination.

As of March 25, 406,601 people have received vaccine in Idaho and 252,665 people are fully vaccinated.

As of March 25, there have been 178,887 cases of COVID-19 and a total of 1,954 COVID-19-related deaths in Idaho.

Over the past week, the counties seeing the highest COVID-19 infection rates include Bonneville, Madison, and Jefferson. Those counties have been seeing 7-day moving average incident rates of 42.2, 38.3, and 37.8 per 100,000 people respectively.

COVID-19 statistics can be found on the [COVID-19 Case, Laboratory, and Hospital Data Dashboard](#). Case data is now updated Monday through Saturday by 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 (4 p.m. PDT) on Thursdays.

Also on the coronavirus website is the [COVID-19 Vaccine Data Dashboard](#). It includes COVID-19 vaccinations by county and public health district, cumulative doses administered, trend data and more. Additional data may be added in the future. The dashboard updates Monday through Saturday at 5 p.m. (not including holidays).

BRIEFING

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DHW SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Recent social media campaigns have promoted the new, statewide pre-registration system for vaccine appointments; highlighted new statistics, including the number of registrants in the system as well as frequently asked questions about vaccine appointments; promoted DHW resources for those feeling stressed by the pandemic; and communicated the latest updates on vaccine priority groups, among other messages.

COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION ONLINE

The [COVID-19 vaccination information web page](#) includes information on vaccine priority groups, when and where to get vaccinated, and what to expect at a vaccine appointment.

The [COVID-19 vaccine section](#) on the coronavirus website is updated daily. The page includes a comprehensive COVID-19 FAQ that is updated weekly, information on how to volunteer during the pandemic, recordings of DHW's media briefings, 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), among other resources.

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

GOVERNOR'S ACTIONS

Idaho remains in Stage 3 of the Idaho Rebounds Plan. Under the Stage 3 Stay Healthy Guidelines, gatherings should be limited to 50 or fewer people, though the rule doesn't apply to political and religious expression. See the [press release](#) for more information about the move.

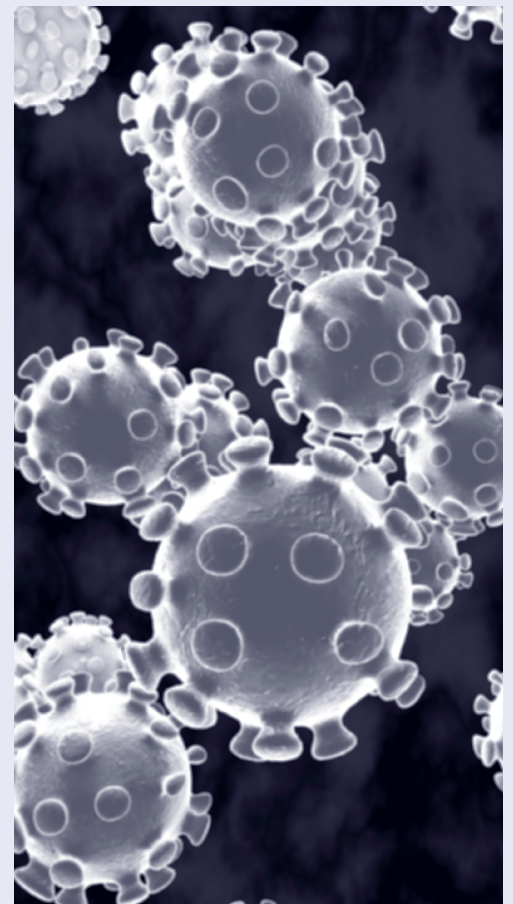
BUSTING COVID-19 MYTHS

MYTH: A COVID-19 vaccine that's 60-80 percent effective isn't worth taking.

FACT: No vaccine is perfect, but a vaccine with 60-80 percent efficacy is still effective for reducing severe disease and hospitalization. Some protection is better than no protection. Even if a person who has been vaccinated becomes infected, the likelihood that they develop symptoms that require hospitalization is lowered. Additionally, large community uptake of vaccine at 60-80 percent efficacy will help to reduce disease spread, achieve community immunity, and end the pandemic.

MYTH: COVID-19 vaccines can cause cancer.

FACT: None of the vaccines alter your genes in any way, and therefore cannot cause cancer. The vaccines teach cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response if someone gets infected. Those instructions do not interact with your DNA or alter genes. However, swollen lymph nodes after vaccination can mimic the symptoms of cancer on mammograms or other scans, so make sure to notify your healthcare provider if you are getting a cancer screening or other scans shortly after being vaccinated.



BRIEFING

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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.

DHW WEEKLY MEDIA BRIEFINGS

DHW has hosted weekly media briefings about COVID-19 vaccine every Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. MDT (1:30 p.m. PDT) since Jan. 5. The remote events have included updates from Gov. Little and DHW officials, followed by a question-and answer session with members of the media.

For more information about the briefings see a [press release](#). [Recordings](#) of past media briefings are posted on the coronavirus website.

COMMUNICATIONS FORUM

DHW’s Office of Communications, in partnership with the Gov. Brad Little’s communications director, created a forum for communications professionals in state agencies, health districts, healthcare agencies and facilities, and stakeholders to meet every other Monday to discuss COVID-19-related communications efforts and strategies. The next meeting is on March 29. If you are a communications professional and would like to join the call, send an email to communications@dhw.idaho.gov.