

COVID-19 BRIEFING

Updates on COVID-19 in Idaho



May 21, 2021

Welcome to the Department of Health and Welfare's briefing on the department's latest news, communications activities, and resources for the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting with this edition, the briefing will be published monthly rather than bi-weekly.

New in this edition of the briefing is expanded eligibility of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine to 12-15-year-olds, Idaho's move to Stage 4 of the Idaho Rebounds Plan, new CDC guidance on mask wearing, and more. New sections are marked "NEW," and all other sections are up-to-date as of the time of publishing.



IDAHO CHILDREN AGES 12-15 NOW ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE PFIZER COVID-19 VACCINE

As of May 12, all Idaho children ages 12-15 are eligible to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. The move made 85 percent of Idahoans eligible for the vaccine.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an emergency-use authorization for the Pfizer vaccine among children in this age group on May 10, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended it at its meeting May 12.

See DHW's [press release](#) and [updated FAQ](#) for more information on COVID-19 vaccines and children.



IDAHO MOVES FROM STAGE 3 TO STAGE 4; CDC RELEASES NEW MASK GUIDANCE

On May 11, DHW in coordination with Gov. Brad Little announced Idaho's move from Stage 3 to Stage 4 of the Idaho Rebounds Plan.

View the [Stage 4 Stay Healthy Guidelines](#) and see the [press release](#) for more information.

On May 13, CDC said that fully vaccinated Americans can now participate in indoor and outdoor activities — large or small — without wearing a mask or physically distancing. CDC published [guidance](#) for choosing safer activities.

DHW is reviewing the new CDC guidance for fully vaccinated people and may be issuing updates for the Stage 4 protocols. Updates will be posted on the [Idaho Rebounds website](#) when they are complete and announced on social media.





DHW ANNOUNCES FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINICS

On April 29, DHW announced a new funding opportunity to establish and operate mobile, off-site, walk-in, and special COVID-19 vaccination clinics in underserved populations. That includes communities of high social vulnerabilities, racial and ethnic minority populations, and rural communities, among others.

A total of \$9 million is available on a first-come, first-served basis to enrolled COVID-19 vaccine providers, who can apply for funding [here](#).

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



COVID-19 STATISTICS

As of May 20, 1,180,785 doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Idaho. A total of 570,180 people are now fully vaccinated.

As of May 20, there have been 190,900 cases of COVID-19 and a total of 2,080 COVID-19-related deaths in Idaho.

Over the past week, the counties seeing the highest COVID-19 infection rates in Idaho include Lewis, Kootenai, and Idaho. Those counties are seeing 7-day moving average incident rates of 29.9, 18.1, and 15.4 per 100,000 people respectively.

As of May 20, statewide percent positivity is 4.3%. There have been 273 vaccine breakthrough cases and 442 variants of concern identified in Idaho to date.

COVID-19 statistics, including breakthrough cases, can be found on the [COVID-19 Case, Laboratory, and Hospital Data Dashboard](#). State-level case, laboratory, and hospital data is updated by 5 p.m. MT Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Data on variants of concern and percent positivity is updated by 5 p.m. MT on Thursdays.

Also on the coronavirus website is the [COVID-19 Vaccine Data Dashboard](#). It includes data on COVID-19 vaccinations by county, public health district, age group, race, and ethnicity; information about pre-registrations for COVID-19 vaccine appointments, and an interactive tool that shows how long it will take to vaccinate a given percentage of Idaho's population, among other data. The dashboard updates Monday through Friday by 1 p.m., not including holidays.

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IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
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ACCESSING COVID-19 VACCINE

The state's [COVID-19 vaccine finder tool](#) allows Idahoans to pre-register or schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment, as well as locate a nearby pharmacy offering walk-in appointments.

CDC also offers a simple [tool](#) for finding vaccine appointments that allows users to specify which vaccine they want.

DHW SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Recent social media campaigns have shared information related to Mental Health Awareness Month, which is in May, COVID-19 vaccine walk-in clinics throughout the state, the latest information on COVID-19 in Idaho's long-term care facilities, and updates to CDC's guidance on masks.



COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION ONLINE

The [COVID-19 vaccination information web page](#) includes information on 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 frequently. The page includes the comprehensive COVID-19 Vaccine 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), among other resources.

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

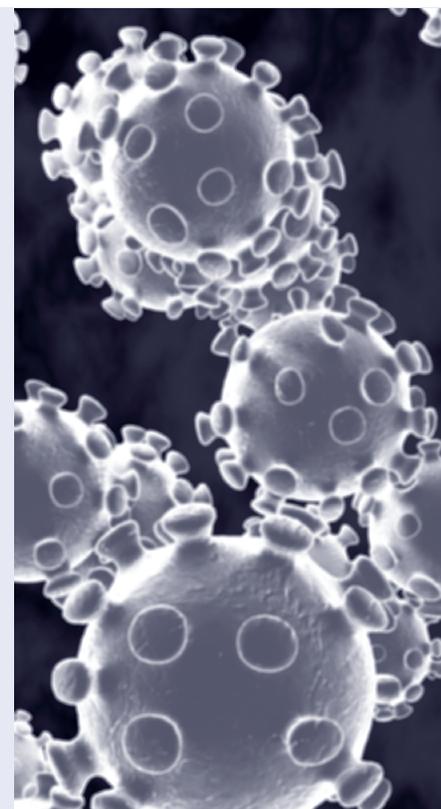
BUSTING COVID-19 MYTHS

MYTH: Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine is not safe for 12-15 year olds.

FACT: COVID-19 vaccine has been administered to over 1,000 adolescents during clinical trials. None of the adolescents in the phase 3 clinical trials had severe reactions to the vaccine. Of those in the trial who received the vaccine, zero adolescents contracted COVID-19, while eighteen adolescents in the placebo group contracted COVID-19.

MYTH: I can get vaccinated against COVID-19 while currently being sick with it.

FACT: People with COVID-19 who have symptoms should wait to be vaccinated until they have recovered from their illness and have met the criteria for discontinuing isolation; those without symptoms should also wait until they meet the criteria before getting vaccinated. This guidance also applies to people who get COVID-19 before getting their second dose of vaccine.

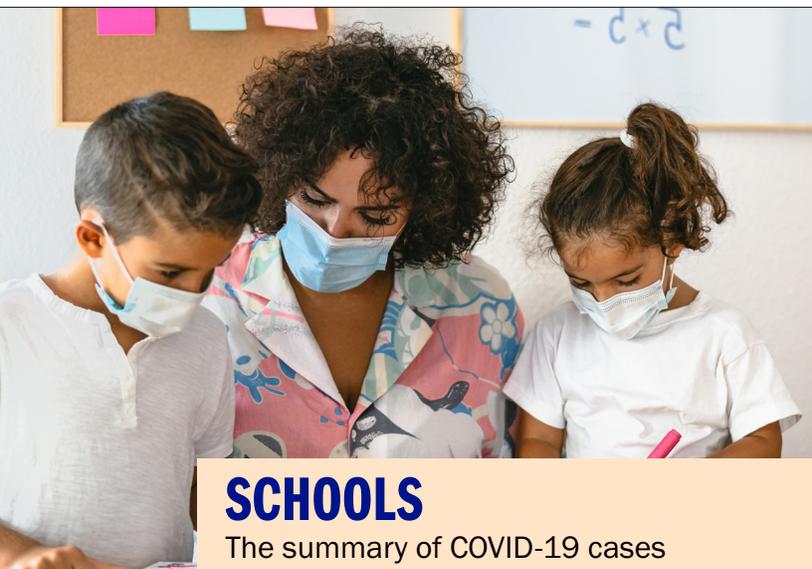




COVID-19 SUPPORT GROUP

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 meets every other Tuesday 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 a [press release](#) for more information.



SCHOOLS

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



LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

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

WEEKLY MEDIA BRIEFINGS

DHW has hosted weekly media briefings about COVID-19 vaccine every Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. since Jan. 5. After the April 27 briefing, the briefings have switched to a new schedule and are now held every other week. The next scheduled briefing is at 2:30 p.m. (MDT) May 25. 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 under the Vaccine tab.

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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 once a month to discuss COVID-19-related communications efforts and strategies. The next meeting is May 24. If you are a communications professional and would like to join the call, send an email to communications@dhw.idaho.gov.