

# COVID-19 BRIEFING

Updates on COVID-19 in Idaho



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH & WELFARE

October 18, 2021

Welcome to the Department of Health and Welfare's monthly briefing on the department's latest news, communications activities, and resources for the COVID-19 pandemic.

New sections are marked "NEW," and all other sections are up-to-date as of the time of publishing.

**NEW**  
INFORMATION

## **FDA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON BOOSTER DOSES FOR MODERNA AND JOHNSON & JOHNSON VACCINES, COVID-19 VACCINES FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:**

The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) met last week to discuss the use of booster doses of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine and the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine. Both vaccines are currently authorized for emergency use to prevent COVID-19 in individuals 18 years of age and older.

The committee voted to recommend an Emergency Use Authorization for booster doses for both Moderna and the Johnson & Johnson vaccines. More details will be available when the FDA takes action on the recommendation, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issues a recommendation.

VRBPAC will meet again on Oct. 26 to discuss Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11.

Learn more:

FDA: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/counterterrorism-and-emerging-threats/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19#new>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**NEW**  
INFORMATION

## **DHW'S DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES A PANDEMIC SURVEY**

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted economies, businesses, schools, healthcare services, and the lives of Idahoans throughout the state. The Division of Behavioral Health in the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare is conducting an anonymous statewide survey to better understand how attitudes, needs, and behaviors of Idahoans have continued to evolve in relation to the pandemic.

The survey is open to all Idaho residents through Oct. 31, 2021, and can be found at: <https://app.keysurvey.com/f/41586564/24e3/>

Read the press release: <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/news/division-behavioral-health-launches-survey-find-out-how-idahoans-are-faring-pandemic>



NEW  
INFORMATION

### IDAHO IS UNDER CRISIS STANDARDS OF CARE STATEWIDE



NEW  
INFORMATION

## CRISIS STANDARDS OF CARE IN IDAHO

Crisis Standards of Care has been activated statewide by the Department of Health and Welfare, but the hospitals will implement according to their own policies and available resources guided by Crisis Standards of Care.

Crisis Standards of Care is a last resort. It means the number of patients needing care is more than the amount of resources (e.g. space, equipment, etc.) available. Activation was driven by a surge of COVID-19 patients that exceeded hospital staff and facility resources.

People who need emergency medical care should seek it and not delay it.

Hospitals and their staffs will give the best care they are able to provide. Not seeking care in a timely fashion could result in worse outcomes.

Learn more:

<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/crisis-standards-care>

## MONOCLONAL ANTIBODY TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE TO AT-RISK IDAHOANS IN LIMITED SUPPLY

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for several monoclonal antibody treatments for mild or moderate COVID-19 for those at high risk of developing severe disease and hospitalization due to COVID-19. Due to limited supply, however, there is no guarantee the treatment will be available for everyone, and it may not be effective in all cases. The COVID-19 vaccine remains the best protection against severe disease, hospitalization, and even death.

### What is monoclonal antibody treatment?

Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-made molecules that act as substitute antibodies. They can help your immune system recognize and respond more effectively to the virus, making it more difficult for the virus to reproduce and cause harm.

Monoclonal antibodies have shown to be effective in reversing sickness caused by COVID-19 and have reduced the risk of hospitalization by 70 percent in clinical trials. However, they do not teach the body to produce its own antibodies and may leave a person exposed to future COVID-19 infection.

Monoclonal antibody treatments are not a replacement for the COVID-19 vaccine, which remains the best way to protect from severe illness, hospitalization or death.

### Who's eligible

The treatment is reserved for high-risk patients. It requires a referral from a doctor or other healthcare provider and a positive virus test, which is an FDA-approved or authorized COVID-19 test that finds the virus' genetic material or molecules from its surface.

### Where to receive treatment?

It is available from a growing number of healthcare providers in Idaho, but they're still limited because manufacturers cut back on production when the pandemic slowed in the spring and summer of 2021. Sites are listed at <https://protect-public.hhs.gov/pages/therapeutics-distribution>. Your provider will need to refer you for treatment if you are ill with COVID-19 and qualify.

There's no guarantee you'll have access to monoclonal antibody treatment if you get sick. The vaccine is still the best tool we have to prevent serious illness and hospitalization.





**NEW**  
INFORMATION

## COVID-19 BOOSTER DOSE UPDATE

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) authorized and recommended booster doses of the Pfizer/BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine for certain people in late September.

Those eligible for a single booster dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine are those who received their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine at least six months earlier and who fall into one of these categories:

- People ages 65 years and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- People ages 50-64 with underlying medical conditions
- People ages 18-49 with underlying medical conditions, based on individual benefit and risk
- People ages 18-64 at an increased risk of exposure and transmission due to the type of work they do (including teachers and healthcare workers) or because they live or work in an institutional setting

More information is coming soon about those who received Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

[Read the full press release](#) from DHW



## UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING HOSPITAL CAPACITY NEEDS

DHW's Division of Public Health leadership meets daily with hospital leaders through the Idaho Medical Operations Coordination Cell (I-MOCC) call. This is a voluntary forum to share information and work together to solve problems.

At this call, DHW staff works to:

Document and understand the current conditions at hospitals, focusing on solving patient movement or resource needs in real time to the extent possible. As part of this discussion, each hospital in attendance reports out on the following:

- Patient status
- Bed availability
- Patient transfer needs
- Other resource needs and shortages
- Staffing challenges
- Triage team activation and operational status

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## DHW PROVIDES ACCURATE INFORMATION EVERY DAY TO HELP COMBAT COVID-19 MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

One of the issues that all government and healthcare organizations face during the pandemic is the abundance of false and misleading information available on social media and other communications channels.

DHW remains focused on delivering **accurate and up-to-date** information daily through the following channels:

- Social media - [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#)
- [DHW Voice blog](#) (new posts on Tuesdays and Fridays)
- [Weekly COVID-19 media briefings](#)
- [Coronavirus website](#) and [DHW website](#)
- Daily responses to information requests from the public and the media
- Public Service Announcements

The following are examples of the false and misleading information that appears regularly on social media and the factual information that we share.

**FALSE:** You can get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

**FACT:** You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

**FALSE:** The mRNA vaccine alters your DNA.

**FACT:** No, it does not. It also is not gene therapy. DHW Director Dave Jeppesen wrote [a blog about how the mRNA vaccine actually works](#) in his Aug. 27 blog.

**FALSE:** All events reported to the federal Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) are caused by vaccination.

**FACT:** No. [VAERS data](#) alone cannot determine if the reported adverse event was caused by a COVID-19 vaccination.

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## DHW PROVIDES ACCURATE INFORMATION EVERY DAY TO HELP COMBAT COVID-19 MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

Everyone, including patients and their healthcare providers, can report events to VAERS, even if it is not clear whether a vaccine caused the problem. Some VAERS reports may contain information that is incomplete, inaccurate, coincidental, or unverifiable.

Serious adverse events reported into VAERS are studied by vaccine safety experts who look for unusually high numbers of health problems, or a pattern of problems, after people receive a vaccine.

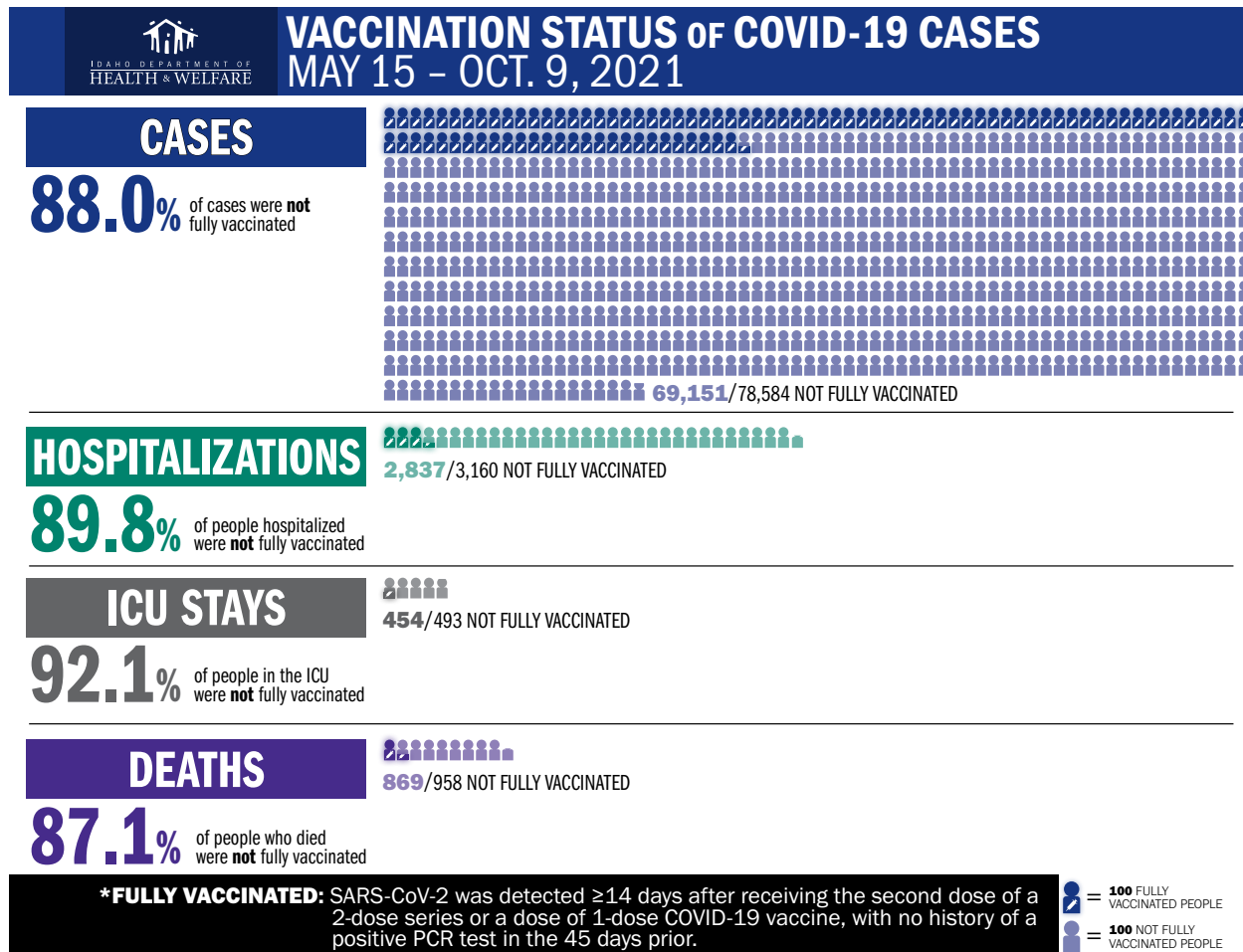
The Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) reviews VAERS reports that indicate a serious adverse event for Idaho residents.

Recently, the number of deaths reported to VAERS after COVID-19 vaccination has been misinterpreted and misreported as deaths proven to be caused by vaccination. However, reports to VAERS of adverse events after vaccination, including deaths, do not necessarily mean that a vaccine caused a health problem.

Learn more about [VAERS](#).

NEW  
INFORMATION

## VACCINATION STATUS OF COVID CASES



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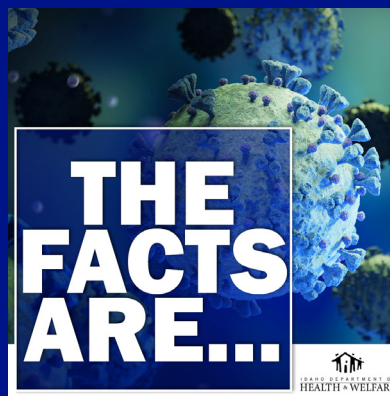
## ADDITIONAL COVID-19 DATA

COVID-19 statistics, including breakthrough cases and vaccination status of 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 seven days a week, excluding holidays. Data on variants of concern and percent positivity is updated by 5 p.m. MT on Thursdays.

The [COVID-19 Vaccine Data Dashboard](#) includes data on COVID-19 vaccinations by county, public health district, age group, race, and ethnicity.

## DHW SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

DHW continues to target misinformation and disinformation on all of our social media platforms, and on our blog at [dhwblog.com](#). Posts continue to debunk the latest vaccine-related myths, and share information about where to get vaccinated as well as daily updates on percent positivity, case counts, and vaccination milestones. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.



*Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.*



## COVID-19 VACCINATION 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 regularly. The page includes the comprehensive COVID-19 vaccine FAQ, recordings of DHW's media briefings, a list of underlying medical conditions that put people at greater risk for COVID-19, and the Governor's actions, among other resources. There is also a link available with resources for COVID-19 vaccine providers.



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## SCHOOLS

Updated weekly summaries of COVID-19 cases associated with schools are available each Monday on the coronavirus website under the [“Schools”](#) tab.

## MEDIA BRIEFINGS

DHW hosts regular briefings for the media about COVID-19 in Idaho. The next one is **Oct. 19**. The remote events have included updates from Gov. Little and DHW officials, followed by a question-and answer session with members of the media. The general public can listen in. For more information about the briefings, visit [coronavirus.idaho.gov](https://coronavirus.idaho.gov). Recordings of past media briefings are posted on the coronavirus website under the vaccine tab.



## COMMUNICATIONS FORUM

DHW’s Office of Communications, in partnership with the Gov. Brad Little’s communications director, hosts a forum for communications professionals in state agencies, health districts, healthcare agencies and facilities, and stakeholders to discuss COVID-19-related communications efforts and strategies. The next meeting is **Oct. 25**. If you are a communications professional and would like to join the call, send an email to [communications@dhw.idaho.gov](mailto:communications@dhw.idaho.gov).



## LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

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