



EIGHTH GRADERS AT EAST PRAIRIE Middle School in Tuscola pose together for the last time as junior high students. A promotion to high school ceremony was held last week at the high school. Photo by Rachel Ray.

IDPH endorses booster dose for children 5-11

SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced that it supports the recommendation by the CDC of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 booster dose for children aged 5 to 11 years old. IDPH issued an advisory to vaccine providers throughout the state endorsing the booster for children 5 through 11 years of age at least five months after completion of a primary series with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, following the emergency use authorization this week by the FDA and the recommendation of the CDC.

"We encourage every parent or guardian of children five and older to consider a booster vaccination for their eligible child," said IDPH Director Amaal Tokars. "And if your children have not yet received their primary dose, it's not too late to start now. Especially with cases rising throughout the state, everyone who is eligible for vaccination should be taking advantage of the opportunity to get vaccinated and boosted. Vaccination remains the strongest way to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19."

In recommending the booster dose for children aged 5 to 11, the CDC noted that since the pandemic began, more than 4.8 million children ages 5 through 11 have been diagnosed with COVID-19, 15,000 have been hospitalized and, tragically, over 180 have died.

As cases increase across the country, a booster dose will safely help restore and enhance protection against severe disease, the CDC said. Public health officials said that while COVID-19 tends to be less severe in children than adults, the omicron wave has seen more kids getting sick with the disease and being hospitalized. In addition, children may also experience

longer term effects, such as long Covid syndrome, even following initially mild disease. These vaccines, which were authorized for children in November 2021, help protect children from both serious complications and long Covid syndrome.

Federal authorities are currently considering authorization of a COVID-19 vaccine for children under 5.

Since the COVID-19 vaccine became available to the public, millions of eligible adults and children across the state of Illinois have received their COVID-19 vaccine or booster dose.

Illinois remains among the highest in the Midwest for its vaccination rates, with more than two thirds of the population fully vaccinated.

More than 22 million vaccines have been administered in Illinois and among children 5 to 11, more than 40% have at least one dose; more than 36 percent are fully vaccinated. Of the total population, more than 76% has received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose; more than 69% of Illinois' total population is fully vaccinated; and 52% of the vaccinated population is boosted according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data indicates that the risk of hospitalization and severe outcomes from COVID-19 is much higher for unvaccinated people than for those who are up to date on their vaccinations.

To find a COVID-19 vaccination location near you, go to www.vaccines.gov.

In addition, the federal government has established a website that provides an all-purpose toolkit that provides information on how to obtain masks, treatment, vaccines and testing resources for all areas of the country at: <https://www.covid.gov/>.



A CROWD STARTS to form Monday in front of Rally Point Fitness under the fire department's giant flag for the second annual cookout benefiting Children of Fallen Patriots. Children of Fallen Patriots provides educational and counseling resources for kids that have lost a parent in the line of duty. The fundraiser has collected about \$6,000 for the charity in two years. Photo by David Porter.



JACKSON BURLEW, LEFT, plays taps while Sean Conner lowers the flag to half mast during Monday's Memorial Day service at the Tuscola Township Cemetery. Photo by David Porter.

COVID numbers on the rise

By Colleen Lehmann, public health liaison
Douglas County Health Department

COVID numbers are, once again, rising across the country, and Illinois is no exception. The week of May 13-20 there were 40,193 new cases reported to IDPH, and 56 deaths. Eight counties, including Champaign, are in the high transmission category, while Douglas and 38 other counties are currently classed as medium transmission. In Region 6, 100 of the 153 ICU beds are currently occupied and 37 of the region's 306 available ventilators are being utilized by COVID patients. IDPH reports that, since the pandemic's start, total cases in the state number 3,263,966 and there have been 33,779 confirmed deaths.

The process by which IDPH notifies you of a positive test re-

sult will change, beginning June 1. On that date, an automated message will direct positive individuals to either call an automated information line or click on a website link for additional guidance. IDPH's move from individual contact tracing calls to automated case notification was decided on because of wide availability of COVID vaccines, home testing kits, and updated isolation/quarantine guidance. Contact tracing investigations of congregate facilities will remain the same.

Vaccination news has been abundant in recent weeks. IDPH has formally recommended Pfizer boosters for the 5-11-year old population, to be given five months after completion of the primary series. And what about vaccines for the under-5 age group? Both Moderna and Pfizer have vaccines pending for the

youngest population (6 months-4 years), awaiting federal approval. A decision is anticipated sometime in June. A second booster of Pfizer or Moderna has also been authorized for ages 50 and up, to be given at least four months after the first booster.

We continue to offer appointment-based COVID vaccination clinics at our Tuscola Outlet Mall the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Keeping current on COVID vaccination—including boosters as they are approved—remains a key component in reducing the likelihood of severe illness or death should you contract COVID. Go online to www.dchealthil.org (this is a new address!) to make an appointment, and to find updated information. This is also where you can make a COVID test appointment.

<p>16" Thin Crust Family Pleaser® with 1 Topping Additional toppings may be purchased.</p> <p>\$23</p> <p>Includes: Family Garden Salad and Soft Drinks</p> <p><small>Dine-In, Carry-Out & Delivery. Coupon Required. Limit 3. Online code: 161fp. Must show coupon. Restrictions may apply. Not valid with other coupons or offers. Toppings exclude extra cheese. Delivery charges may apply. Available at participating Monical's Pizza® locations. Valid 5/30/2022 - 6/26/2022.</small></p>	<p>16" Thin Crust or 14" Pan Pizza with 1 Topping Additional toppings may be purchased.</p> <p>\$17</p> <p><small>Dine-In, Carry-Out & Delivery. Coupon Required. Limit 2. Online code: 161top. Must show coupon. Restrictions may apply. Not valid with other coupons or offers. Toppings exclude extra cheese. Delivery charges may apply. Available at participating Monical's Pizza® locations. Valid 5/30/2022 - 6/26/2022.</small></p>
<p>Two 14" Thin Crust Pizzas with 1 Topping each Must buy in multiples of two. Limit 2 Offers. Additional toppings may be purchased.</p> <p>\$28</p> <p>Upgrade to a 16" for an additional charge.</p> <p><small>Dine-In, Carry-Out & Delivery. No Coupon Required. Limit 2. Online code: 142pie. Must mention offer. Restrictions may apply. Not valid with other coupons or offers. Toppings exclude extra cheese. Delivery charges may apply. Available at participating Monical's Pizza® locations. Valid 5/30/2022 - 6/26/2022.</small></p>	<p>8" 1 Topping Thin Crust or Pan Individual Pleaser Additional toppings may be purchased.</p> <p>\$9</p> <p>Includes: Individual Garden Salad and Large Soft Drink (Delivery available with \$10 minimum purchase)</p> <p><small>Dine-In, Carry-Out & Delivery. Coupon Required. Online code: 8pleaser. Must show coupon. Restrictions may apply. Not valid with other coupons or offers. Toppings exclude extra cheese. Delivery charges may apply. Available at participating Monical's Pizza® locations. Valid 5/30/2022 - 6/26/2022.</small></p>

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