
CLACKAMAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION WEEKLY REPORT ON COVID-19 FOR 9/29/2021

Is a COVID-19 vaccine booster recommended for me?

You should if you received **PFIZER and:**

- 65+
- Long-term care facility resident
- 50-64, with underlying medical conditions

You may if you received **PFIZER, are 18-64 years old and:**

- Underlying medical conditions
- Increased exposure and transmission risk*
*because of where you work or live, including teachers, grocery store employees, health care workers and people living in congregate care settings

Not at this time:

- MODERNA**
- JOHNSON & JOHNSON**

Booster doses are **not currently recommended** for the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines at this time. **This may change in October or November.**

Note: It is recommended that **social determinants of vulnerability** be included in the assessment of medical conditions that qualify individuals for booster doses.

To learn more and to find booster doses, visit <https://govstatus.egov.com/or-oha-booster-covid-19-vaccine>.

Oregon Health Services

Pfizer Booster Approval for certain groups

Those who have received the **Pfizer vaccine** and fit one of the categories below can schedule a booster six months after their second shot.

Those who **should** receive a booster dose of Pfizer:

- Adults age 65 and older and those living in long-term care facilities
- Adults age 50-64 with [underlying medical conditions](#) or who are at increased risk of social inequities

Those who **may** receive a booster dose:

- Adults age 18 through 64 years:
 - with underlying medical conditions, or
 - who are at increased risk for SARS-CoV-2 exposure and transmission because of where they work or live, such as teachers, grocery store employees, health care workers and people who live in congregate care settings.

Boosters are not yet recommended or available for people who received the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccines, or any other vaccine that may have been obtained internationally. Appointments can be made with most pharmacies and many primary care providers. Clackamas County Public Health will have boosters available by appointment at local vaccine clinics the week of October 4.

All available COVID-19 vaccines still offer protection against the COVID-19 virus.

COVID-19 cases among people under age 18

The number of COVID-19 cases among people under age 18 is steadily increasing. This is likely due to more physical interactions and lower vaccination rates or vaccine ineligibility in this population, putting them at greater risk of contracting the disease than vaccinated older adults. While the cases are increasing, hospitalizations due to severe illness and death in this age range remain rare.

- 22% of statewide cases the week of 9/12 were in people under the age 18. The pediatric case rate in Clackamas County was 166 per 100,000 for the same week.
- 2,068 pediatric cases were reported statewide, down from 2,536 the week prior.
- Of these cases, 52% were symptomatic, 11.4% were asymptomatic, and 36.6% had unknown symptom status. The unknown portions are due to limited Public Health resources for interviewing cases in times of surge.

For more information on pediatrics, [visit the OHA Pediatric Dashboards](#).

Vaccines for youth

The vaccination rate for youth age 12-17 in Clackamas County is 67.2%. The vast majority of COVID cases are in unvaccinated people. Individuals under 12 are not eligible for the vaccine, thus are a larger population that is susceptible.

Last week, Pfizer/BioNTech announced that their two-dose vaccine was safe and effective in children ages 5 to 11 and it will seek U.S. authorization for this age group soon. The Pfizer vaccine has been shown to be safe and highly effective in preventing severe illness among people ages 12 and up.

We thank the over 70% of eligible Clackamas residents who have been vaccinated, as that is the best way to protect spread amongst children.

Monoclonal Antibody Treatment Shortage

The increased incidence of the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 has caused a surge in the use of monoclonal antibody (mAb) therapy. Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is working to equitably distribute the allocation weekly across participating providers. Since there is a shortage, allocations will be based on the following considerations: COVID-19 hospitalizations, new COVID-19 cases, community level clinics/ pharmacies that serve communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and utilization rate of mAb doses.

COVID-19 hospitalizations

As of September 27, 2021, the number of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 across Oregon is 866. There are 243 COVID-19 patients in intensive care unit (ICU) beds. There are 57 available adult ICU beds out of 649 total (9% availability) and 392 available adult non-ICU beds out of 4,272 (9% availability). Vaccines continue to be the safest and most effective way to protect from COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths.

COVID-19 Cases in Clackamas County

The number of [new confirmed and presumptive COVID-19 cases reported](#) for Clackamas County.

Week of Date	Case Count	Cases per 100k	Test Positivity
September 19 th	933	218.7	8.6%
September 12 th	855	200.5	9.2%
September 5 th	982	230.2	10%

COVID-19 Vaccinations in Clackamas County

[Vaccination data](#) for Clackamas County.

Weekly Vaccinations in Clackamas County (per OHA)	
9/21-9/27	4,302
9/14-9/20	4,392
9/7-9/13	4,357

Vaccine Equity Grants

Clackamas County Public Health has awarded funding to two additional Vaccine Equity Grant applicants:

- Outside In (\$30,000) will offer mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinics in Clackamas County, including partnerships events with Clackamas Service Center, the Estacada Food Bank, and Milwaukie High School. Their target audience will be North Clackamas School District students and families.
- Neighborhood Health Center (\$30,000) will host vaccine events and offer mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinics at schools, worksites, places of worship this autumn. NHC will provide outreach and education through routine referrals, triage, and in one-on-one settings for COVID-19 vaccinations.

The Public Health Division as also submitted a Vaccine Equity Plan Progress Report to OHA. Once approved, Public Health will qualify for additional funding to support our local vaccine clinics and outreach efforts.

COVID-19 Outbreaks

The Clackamas County Public Health Division COVID-19 Contact Tracing Group includes the Outbreak Team that coordinates with schools, businesses, long-term care facilities (LTCFs), childcare facilities, food/farm workers and more to assist with mitigation of COVID-19 outbreaks. [OHA provides a weekly outbreak report.](#) There is increased concern regarding long-term care facilities. Data that shows outbreaks in these settings closely follow the epicurve of the general population – when cases are up in the community, they are also up in long-term care facilities. Luckily, we are seeing fewer hospitalizations and deaths in this highly vaccinated community than we were prior to vaccine availability, but this is still one of the highest risk populations.

Testing information

PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests are the most accurate type of COVID-19 tests. They are processed by a medical laboratory, so results are usually not available for at least 24 hours and up to a couple of days. OHA, pharmacies, clinics and other providers across the county administer these tests (including Clackamas County Public Health). This type of test is not available to purchase over-the-counter.

Rapid tests (also known as *antigen tests*) produce results in as little as 15 minutes. [According to the Centers for Disease Control](#), “[Antigen test sensitivity] varies depending on the course of infection, but [is] generally moderate-to-high at times of peak viral load.” Therefore, these tests are more likely to produce a false negative in persons who are asymptomatic. They remain, however, an extremely important tool in controlling the spread of COVID-19. Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Tests are used by Oregon Health Authority in their statewide school testing program as well as at testing events run by Clackamas County Public Health and at Clackamas County Health Centers. Rapid tests, in general, are administered by pharmacies, clinics, and other providers across the county, and are available to purchase for at home use at many retailers (however, stocking shortages have been common).

Home testing kits are popular due to the convenience; however, the accuracy of how individuals collect their own sample at home cannot be monitored. A person with a positive test result from an at-home test kit should [follow the guidelines on our website](#).

What is the cost of testing? Like all medical testing, the cost of COVID-19 testing varies. Most insurance providers and the Oregon Health Plan cover the costs of PCR tests and associated care. At-home tests cost around \$25-50 each, although the costs might be covered if ordered by a health care provider. Unfortunately, there is not a one-size-fits-all answer to this question, and people should contact the coronavirus testing site before going to learn about testing criteria, cost, availability, and hours.

Where do people go to get tested? A current list of testing locations is attached to this report. Some school districts have testing as well; parents can check in with their district administration for details. For information on testing access and locations in Clackamas County, please see the *COVID-19 Testing in Clackamas County* document [on our website](#).

When will testing for businesses with 100+ employees begin? We do not yet have detailed information on requirements for employee vaccinations and testing, first announced by the White House in early September. [According to a recent post by League of Oregon Cities](#), this information is not expected to be released until late October.

Natural Immunity

It is not proven that the natural immunity that occurs after someone has Covid-19 can substitute for vaccine-induced immunity. There is a lack of peer-reviewed studies, and scientists do not agree about history of Covid-19 disease as an indication of immunity.

We do know that COVID-19 re-infections occur - sometimes they are more severe than the initial illness, sometimes less. Variants complicate the data. We cannot adequately assess the level of immunity each individual does or does not get to varying strains of SarsCoV-2 and to variable severity of illness.

The risks of severe illness, long term symptoms, and death is higher for COVID-19 than for many viruses (even ones we widely use vaccines for), and the risk of severe illness, long term symptoms and death from the vaccines is extraordinarily LOW, contrary to much inaccurate information about vaccines that is circulating in our community.

We are able to understand vaccination better and have more information on risk factors for breakthrough cases. While natural immunity clearly plays some role, until the CDC changes statutory protocols on this based on available science, we will not be able to change this at a local or even state level. Current guidelines state that an individual with COVID-19 can be presumed to be immune for 90 days after initial infection.

Are antibody tests available to determine if you have natural immunity?

Multiple types of antibody tests for COVID-19 are available through healthcare professionals and laboratories. A positive test shows you have antibodies, from either a vaccination or previous infection, but neither a positive or negative test reflects if you are immune or not. Check with your healthcare professional to see if they recommend an antibody tests. Positive antibody tests are not considered proof of immunity to COVID-19.

What will be the impact of the vaccine requirement be on the health care delivery system?

We cannot estimate the impact of the requirement on the workforce. These discussions must also take into account the stress of the ongoing pandemic and burnout and how many health care workers we are losing to fatigue. Many are struggling to care for dying patients, knowing that these deaths are largely preventable at this time. We do know that the vast majority of healthcare workers in Clackamas County chose to be vaccinated without the requirement (87% as of 9/5/21; numbers updated monthly).

Disease Response

The vaccination team is planning for boosters vaccines. They are working to assure a vaccine plan for our long term, congregate care settings and those who live and receive care in their family home. The home team provided over 1200 primary series vaccinations in the home setting all who will be eligible for a booster vaccine. There are over 500 long term congregate care facilities in Clackamas County.

As pediatric cases increase, the outbreak team is focused on school outbreaks and assisting schools with implementing isolation and quarantine guidance. These outbreaks often begin in sports and extracurricular activities. If you have a positive test for Covid it is important to properly isolate and for your contacts to quarantine.