

# The State of Our Children: Kids and COVID-19

September 3, 2021



As hospitals in our community and across the United States are once again experiencing tremendous numbers of COVID-19 patients - primarily those who are unvaccinated - due to the rapid-spreading Delta variant, we are also seeing more children in our hospital infected with COVID-19. Unlike last year's surge, when COVID-19 was often a secondary diagnosis in kids coming in for other medical reasons, today, we are seeing children who primarily have a COVID-19 diagnosis. The impact of the Delta variant on kids is clear.

**This is the state of our children for September 3, 2021.**

## COVID-19 Vaccine and Kids

**Dr. Karen Dahl, Valley Children's Vice President of Quality, Patient Safety and Medical Affairs**

### Off-label use of COVID vaccine in children under 12 is not recommended

We recently witnessed a new milestone in the fight against COVID-19 as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted full approval of the Pfizer vaccine for those 16 and older. It remains under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for those 12-15.

Clinical trials involving children ages 5-11 are underway for the Pfizer vaccine. Data submission to the FDA is not anticipated until later this fall.

Formal FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine also means that physicians can legally administer the vaccine for off-label use, meaning they can use the vaccine for another disease or condition for which it was not been approved. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly discourages this practice and cautions against off-label use, especially in children under 12 years of age.

## COVID-19 symptoms and testing

To prevent infection of others, Valley Children's offers an online COVID-19 symptom checker to help determine the appropriate level of care. This symptom checker can be found at [valleychildrens.org/COVID19symptoms](https://valleychildrens.org/COVID19symptoms). For guidance on when to go see a pediatrician or emergency department, consider this handy chart (right).

COVID-19 testing is recommended for anyone who is experiencing symptoms. For free or discounted COVID-19 testing, visit [valleycovidhelp.com](https://valleycovidhelp.com) for locations across the Valley. For COVID-19 testing only, the emergency department or urgent care is not recommended - these sites are busy with the surge of patients and the cost will be much higher since you will be seen for a medical visit in addition to testing. If you or a child is experiencing a medical emergency, please call 911 or visit the closest emergency department. If an emergency visit is appropriate, please let staff know about your possible exposure and/or symptoms immediately on arrival.

**Valley Children's HEALTHCARE**

### Pediatrician or Emergency Dept.

When to call your pediatrician and when to visit the emergency department when your child is sick.

Call Your Pediatrician	Visit the Emergency Dept.
Stay home and contact your child's pediatrician if your child has:	Take your child to the emergency room if your child has:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low-grade fever</li><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Cough</li><li>• Congestion</li><li>• Sore Throat</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trouble breathing</li><li>• Difficulty keeping fluids down</li><li>• Trouble staying alert or waking up</li><li>• Bluish lips and face</li><li>• Persistent chest pain or pressure</li></ul>

If your child has mild symptoms or no symptoms, we encourage you to visit a community testing site found at [www.valleychildrens.org/covid19](https://www.valleychildrens.org/covid19) instead of visiting the emergency department.

## Preparing for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has warned clinicians across the country of a spike in RSV cases, especially in the Southern United States. While Valley Children's is not currently experiencing this spike, we do anticipate that an increase of RSV cases and respiratory illnesses are on the horizon. Since June 2021, Valley Children's has had 51 total cases of RSV, 18 of which were in the last week of August alone. Compared to last season between the months of November and March, Valley Children's had two cases of RSV in 2020-21 (which was significantly reduced due to the masking mandate and State lockdown), and 528 in 2019-20 (a more typical year with school in session and masks not in use).

RSV in children can lead to bronchiolitis or pneumonia, and babies 6 months and younger may require hospitalization if they are experiencing difficulty breathing or are dehydrated. Remain watchful for RSV symptoms, which include runny nose, decreased appetite, coughing, sneezing, fever, wheezing and trouble breathing. Small infants may have non-specific symptoms such as irritability or decreased activity. The symptoms of RSV may closely resemble the symptoms for COVID-19, so even if a COVID-19 test is negative, we recommend that children stay home if they have any symptoms of respiratory viral infection. To reduce the chance of illness of COVID-19 and all respiratory illness, please wash hands frequently, cover a cough or sneeze with tissues or sleeve and stay home if you or your child are ill.

### Sources:

1. Jenco, Melissa. American Academy of Pediatrics News. AAP: Don't use COVID-19 vaccine off-label for children. (August 23, 2021) <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2021/08/23/fda-covid-vaccine-licensure-082321>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Increased Interseasonal Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Activity in Parts of the Southern United States. (June 10, 2021). <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2021/han00443.asp>

## Current Data and Trends Across Valley Children's Healthcare Network

	Tests Administered	Positive Tests	Positivity Rate	Hospitalizations
<b>AUGUST</b>	<b>▲ 5,632</b>	<b>▲ 484</b> (362*)	<b>▲ 8.6%</b>	<b>▲ 43</b>
<b>JULY</b>	<b>3,440</b>	<b>133</b> (81*)	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>JUNE</b>	<b>3,006</b>	<b>37</b> (13*)	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>MAY</b>	<b>4,011</b>	<b>61</b> (20*)	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>27</b>

\*COVID+ patients in Valley Children's Emergency Department