



COUNTY OF ORANGE – HEALTH CARE AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

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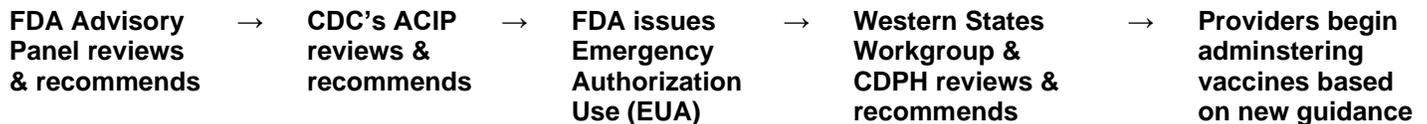
OC Health Care Agency Monitors Status of Vaccine Eligibility for Children Ages 5-11, Issues Reminders on Halloween Safety

(Santa Ana, CA) – To prepare for the next phase of vaccination distribution, the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) continues to monitor activity by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) regarding COVID-19 vaccine eligibility for children ages 5-11.

Earlier this week, an advisory panel at the FDA convened a meeting to discuss information and data that may support the administration of the Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11. The CDC’s ACIP will be meeting November 2-3 to conduct the review.

“The HCA is required, along with other COVID-19 vaccine providers, to administer vaccines in accordance with all program requirements and recommendations,” says **Dr. Clayton Chau**, HCA Agency Director and County Health Officer. “Similar to the actions taken for the recent authorization of booster doses, we ask for the public’s patience as we await further direction on vaccine eligibility for children 5-11 from the FDA, CDC, Western States (California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington) Scientific Safety Review Workgroup and CDPH.”

The illustration below shows the process by which the COVID vaccines are authorized:



Vaccines continue to be widely available throughout Orange County for walk-in, same day and future appointments. Individuals who are not yet vaccinated against COVID-19, anyone eligible to receive a booster dose and those eligible for a third dose (immunocompromise conditions) are encouraged to visit a local pharmacy or healthcare provider, or go online to [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://www.myturn.ca.gov) or [Othena.com](https://www.othena.com), to schedule a vaccination appointment. HCA vaccine clinics are continuing to deliver vaccines to the most vulnerable population and hard-to-reach communities in Orange County.

For more information on available vaccine distribution channels in Orange County, please visit [COVIDVaccineFacts.com](https://www.COVIDVaccineFacts.com) and click on “Find a COVID-19 Vaccine”.

Precautions for Safe Halloween

In anticipation of Halloween celebrations, the HCA reminds residents to take the following special precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- **Keep Your Distance:** Trick-or-treating can sometimes lead to crowds when walking or waiting for candy to be handed out. Keep a safe distance from others who are not part of your household.
- **Wear a Mask:** Face coverings are strongly recommended, even outdoors where there are crowds of people you do not know, and especially for children not currently eligible for the vaccine. If there is adequate spacing outdoors, masks are not necessary; however, unvaccinated or high risk individuals should use additional protection with a mask that snugly covers the mouth and nose in the event they are in crowded areas indoors or outdoors.
- **Play it Safe:** Instead of gathering indoors, when possible, consider outdoor Halloween activities such as a haunted outdoor play area, outdoor scavenger hunt, or outdoor Halloween themed dinner.
- **Giving Candy:** Distribute candy outside by setting up a station with hand sanitizer and individually wrapped candies or goodie bags for Trick-or-Treaters to help themselves, allowing for social distancing.

“Although we have been seeing a decline in our COVID-19 cases over the last several weeks, we have started to see slight increases in ICU admissions in our county as well as other counties in the state recently,” says **Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong**, Deputy County Health Officer. “This should serve an indicator that we still need to exercise safe precautions to protect our loved ones and ensure that we don’t enter another surge.”

Children are also encouraged to walk safely and not run to avoid slips and falls. Adults should drive safely and be especially alert for pedestrians who may be walking, riding their bikes or skateboarding during the prime trick-or-treating hours of 5:30-9:30 p.m.

All residents celebrating Halloween should wear reflective gear, walk with a group of family members and carry a flashlight to see and so others can see them. To protect one another from getting COVID-19, everyone who is eligible and not yet vaccinated should get vaccinated. **Over 90% of COVID-19 hospitalizations continue to be among people who are unvaccinated.**

For additional guidance on how to celebrate safely during the holidays, please visit <https://covid19.ca.gov/holidays>.

Status of COVID-19 Cases in Orange County

Between October 22 and October 28, the seven-day average COVID-19 case rate dropped from 6.7 to 6.4 per 100,000 people, with the average number of daily COVID-19 cases declining from 216 to 205. The positivity rate also decreased from 2.5 to 2.4 percent and hospitalizations from 205 to 195 per day. ICU admissions have slightly increased from 43 to 53 per day.

Orange County COVID-19 case count and testing figures are updated daily, Monday through Friday, at occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/coronavirus-in-oc.

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