

COVID-19 Update

February 24: State and City Lift Masking Mandate, and NM Offers Vaccination for Children Ages 5 to 11

Today's issue features an update on the state and city masking mandate, as well as information about the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 across the health system.

Starting next week, COVID-19 Update will no longer be distributed every week. It will appear in the biweekly NM systemwide Physician Focus newsletter, or as needed. For all of the latest COVID-19 news, please visit the [COVID-19 section](#) on Physician Forum and [NM Interactive](#) (login required).

STATE AND CITY LIFT MASKING MANDATE

The city of Chicago **announced** Monday that it will remove the mask and vaccine requirements for certain public spaces on February 28 to align with the state of Illinois' previously **announced** plans to lift the statewide indoor mask mandate on that day. Masks will continue to be required in healthcare settings, on public transportation and in other congregate settings, such as long-term care facilities, day care centers, homeless shelters and prisons.

Based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **guidelines**, individuals with COVID-19 must continue to isolate for five days and continue to mask for days 6 through 10 in public spaces. The Chicago Department of Public Health recommends that Chicagoans who are immunocompromised or have a family member who is immunocompromised continue to wear a mask, as well as residents under age 5, who are still not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine.

As of February 21, the positivity rate in Chicago is 1.5%, with confirmed cases averaging 283 per day. The seven-day rolling average for test positivity as well as COVID-19 related hospitalizations have all declined to an acceptable lower-risk range.

It is worth noting that more Chicagoans were hospitalized with COVID-19 during the omicron surge than at any prior point in the pandemic, and the great majority of those hospitalized were unvaccinated.

NM continues to require all patients and visitors to wear a face mask at all times, regardless of vaccination status. Patients and visitors may wear their own N95 or KN95 mask, or cover their personal mask with an NM-provided surgical mask.

For more information about masking guidelines, please view the [PPE FAQ](#) on Physician Forum or [NM Interactive](#) (login required). For vaccination information, visit [COVID-19 Vaccines for People Age 12 and Older](#) on nm.org.

NM OFFERS VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN AGES 5 TO 11

COVID-19 vaccines are now **recommended** by the CDC for children ages 5 to 11. Visit the [CDC website](#) for more information about the COVID-19 vaccine for children.

Those ages 5 and older who are moderately or severely immunocompromised should get an additional primary shot of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at least 28 days after their second dose.

Select Northwestern Medicine Immediate Care Centers now offer the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to all children ages 5 to 11. The child does not need to be a Northwestern Medicine patient to receive the vaccine. Immediate Care Center locations offering the vaccine to this age group include:

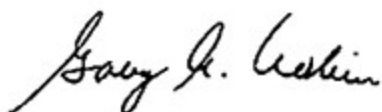
- Evanston
- Gurnee
- Lakeview
- McHenry
- Naperville
- Sycamore

Many community locations also offer COVID-19 vaccination. Use the following resources to find a location near you:

- The [State of Illinois Vaccination Location page](#) has information about statewide vaccination clinics.
- [Vaccines.gov](#) allows you to search for a vaccination clinic by ZIP code.
- [CVS](#) and [Walgreens](#) offer COVID-19 vaccines in many communities.

For additional vaccination location information, visit [COVID-19 Vaccines for People Age 12 and Older](#) on nm.org.

As mask mandates and vaccination restrictions continue to be lifted across the state, please continue to educate patients about updated vaccination and booster guidelines, as well as other safety measures, especially for those at highest risk of serious illness. As always, thank you for all you do every day to keep our patients, communities and colleagues safe.



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