



**NEVADA
HEALTH
RESPONSE**

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COVID-19 Press Bulletin for August 19, 2021

Carson City, NV — Today, Candice McDaniel, Deputy Director of Programs for the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services and Dr. Ellie Graeden of Talus Analytics provided information on Nevada’s ongoing COVID-19 response and vaccination efforts, during a call with members of the media.

This bulletin provides facts, figures, and informational items from the call. As a reminder, data is provided in a dashboard on the home page of the [Nevada Health Response](#) website.

SUMMARY:

THIRD DOSE:

- The administration of a third dose of COVID-19 mRNA vaccine for those who are moderately to severely immunocompromised has been authorized.
- People who have a weakened immune system make up about 3% of U.S. adults, and are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 because they are more at risk of serious, prolonged illness.
- In Nevada, this population is also 3%, or approximately 92,400 individuals, 12 years of age and older.
- Studies found that this population may not build the same level of immunity to the 2-dose vaccine series compared to people who are not immunocompromised and may benefit from an additional dose to make sure they have enough protection against COVID-19.
- This third dose, to be given at a minimum of 28 days after the initial series is completed, is considered part of the vaccination series and not a booster shot.
- The recommendation includes people with a range of conditions, such as:

- recipients of organ or stem cell transplants,
- people with advance or untreated HIV infection,
- active recipients of treatment for cancer,
- people who are taking some medications that weaken the immune system.
- A full list of conditions can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [website](#).
- The third dose of vaccine should be from the same brand as what the patient originally received.
- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to recommend the additional dose and the Nevada State Immunization Program is working to share information with all of Nevada’s vaccinating providers.
- To help ensure there are no barriers for this vulnerable population, individuals can self-attest and receive the additional dose wherever the mRNA vaccines are offered.
- Severely immunocompromised individuals do not have a robust immune response so the additional dose is administered to enhance their response to the primary series and at this time the additional dose is only for those who received the Pfizer or Moderna mRNA vaccines.
- This recommendation does not apply to the single dose Janssen vaccine or to individuals without compromised immune systems.

PREGNANCY:

- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective for pregnant people and do not cause fertility problems in men or women.
- Pregnant and recently pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people.
- Pregnancy causes changes in the body that could make it easier to get very sick from respiratory viruses like the one that causes COVID-19 and these changes in the body can continue after pregnancy.
- If you are pregnant and unsure about the vaccine, speak with a trusted health care professional.

PHARMACY DEPOT PROGRAM:

- The Nevada State Immunization Program, in partnership with the Nevada State Board of Pharmacy, has announced the [Pharmacy Depot Program](#) to help providers statewide better serve their patients.

- This pilot program is designed to support patient access and increase the number of Nevada health care professionals able to stock and administer COVID-19 vaccines.
- Having patients engage with their trusted health care provider is important to address health misinformation.
- This program eliminates the barrier that providers must store a minimum quantity of doses from the manufacturer; allowing them to only order from the depot what they need to serve their patients.
- A strong recommendation from a trusted physician or health care provider is critical for increasing vaccine acceptance.
- CVS, Walgreen's and Smith's pharmacies are key partners in the initial rollout of the initiative and the program is working to expand to other pharmacies.

UPDATED DATA:

- As of Monday, Nevada has the lowest 14-day change in cases nationwide due to its proactive mask guidance and vaccination effort. These measures are working to flatten the ongoing surge.
 - Nevada's cases increased by less than 4% over the past two weeks, 16 times lower than the national average of 64%.
- Statewide, hospitalizations also continue to increase, but at a slowing pace.
 - The rate of hospitalization increased by 3% over the past two weeks.
 - This is a significant reduction from the previous two week period in which rate increase was 37%.
 - Data from the Nevada Hospital Association is showing that different regions of the State are experiencing varying hospitalizations at this time:
 - Northern Nevada hospitals continue to experience increases in COVID-19 patients.
 - The number of COVID-19 patients hospitalized and in the ICU in the North have been increasing week over week. Occupancy rates have been elevated to "watch status."
 - Currently, COVID-19 patients are not overwhelming the hospital infrastructure according to the Nevada Hospital Association.
 - In rural areas, occupancy rates have also been elevated to "watch status," based on the percentage increase in occupied beds.
 - In the south, 24% of all patients hospitalized have COVID-19, with 33% of all licensed ICU beds occupied by a COVID-19 patient, which is consistent with hospitalizations from previous weeks.

- Nationwide, the vaccines are keeping people protected from serious illness with 97% of hospitalized COVID patients being unvaccinated, similar to what is being seen in initial analysis by NHA in Nevada.
- Vaccines are the way out of this pandemic, and Nevada's vaccination campaign continues to show results. The percentage of unvaccinated Nevadans getting their first dose is as high as when vaccines rolled out widely in May, though the rate is slowing compared to the previous weeks' increase.
 - About 2% of unvaccinated Nevadans chose to get their first dose last week.
 - Nevada administered 1,615 doses per 100,000 people last week, higher than the national average of 969 per 100,000.

BOOSTER DOSE:

- The COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States continue to be remarkably effective in reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant.
- A new CDC study finds the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in providing at least 24 weeks of protection for fully vaccinated adults against severe COVID-19 illness requiring hospitalization.
- New guidance on third doses of the vaccine was released this week from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- While the initial guidance reserves the third dose of vaccine for those who are immunocompromised, it has now been announced that a "booster" dose of vaccine for the general population may begin in the fall subject to the FDA conducting an independent evaluation and determination of the safety and effectiveness of a third dose of the mRNA vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna, and the ACIP issuing booster dose recommendations based on a thorough review of the evidence.
- There has been no official guidance released regarding follow up shots for the Janssen vaccine.
- These follow up shots would be considered a booster shot, since, like other vaccines, vaccine-induced protection against SARS-CoV-2 infection begins to decrease over time.
- While the vaccine remains highly effective at reducing risk from severe disease, hospitalization and death, the reduced protection in combination with the Delta and other variants of concern make it important to "boost" immunity.
- The announcement of a third dose does not mean the vaccine is not working but the addition of a third dose can help keep the immune response strong.

- It is critical that unvaccinated and partially vaccinated people get their primary series of vaccines to further reduce the risk of COVID-19 and its more severe outcomes.

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