



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Tanya Phillips, Jackson County Public Health, 541-770-7708

DATE OF RELEASE: November 22, 2021, 10:30 a.m.

COVID-19 Updates

[Medford, Oregon] — Everyone 18 years and older are now eligible for a COVID-19 booster dose. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and free. The Oregon Health Authority authorized pharmacies, health clinics, and other vaccine providers in the state to begin administering boosters on Saturday, November 20. The state's orders follow actions by the federal government and [the Western States Scientific Safety Review Panel to authorize expanded booster eligibility](#).

Booster doses help people maintain strong immunity to disease longer. The first vaccine series builds up the immune system to make the antibodies needed to fight the disease. Over time, the immune response weakens. A booster dose stimulates the initial response and tends to result in higher antibody levels that help people maintain their immunity longer.

While booster doses are available to everyone 18 years and older, they are strongly recommended for people older than 50, those 18 years and older who live in long-term care facilities, and anyone who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Vaccinated people are eligible for a booster 6 months after completing their initial series if they received a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or 2 months after receiving their Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

“The new eligibility criteria will make it easier for people to determine if they are eligible to get a booster dose,” says Tanya Phillips, Health Promotion and Preparedness Manager for Jackson County Public Health.

“COVID-19 vaccines remain the best tool we have to make our communities safe and to end this pandemic,” states Dr. Jim Shames, Health Officer for Jackson County Public Health. “We are all eager to get life back to where it was before the pandemic, and getting vaccinated will help us get there. Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and the flu is important as we embark on the holiday season. Let's keep one another safe this holiday.”

Safer Ways to Celebrate the Holidays

Holiday traditions are important for families and children. There are several ways to enjoy holiday traditions and protect your health. Because many generations tend to gather to celebrate holidays, the best way to minimize COVID-19 risk and keep your family and friends safer is to get vaccinated if you're eligible.

Here are safer ways to celebrate the holidays:

- Protect those not yet eligible for vaccination, such as young children, by getting yourself, and other eligible people around them vaccinated.
- Wear well-fitting masks over your nose and mouth if you are in public indoor settings if you are not fully vaccinated.
 - Even fully vaccinated people should wear a mask in public indoor settings in communities with substantial to high transmission.
 - Outdoors is safer than indoors.
 - Avoid crowded, poorly ventilated spaces.
 - If you are sick or have symptoms, don't host or attend a gathering.
 - Get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have a close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

If you are considering traveling for a holiday or event, visit CDC's [Travel](#) page to help you decide what is best for you and your family. CDC still recommends delaying travel until you are [fully vaccinated](#).

Special considerations:

- People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken their immune system may not be fully protected even if they are fully vaccinated and have received an [additional dose](#). They should continue to take all [precautions recommended for unvaccinated people, including wearing a well-fitted mask](#), until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.
- You might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission if a member of your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated.
- If you are gathering with a group of people from multiple households and potentially from different parts of the country, you could consider additional precautions (e.g., avoiding crowded indoor spaces before travel, taking a test) in advance of gathering to further reduce risk.
- Do NOT put a mask on children younger than 2 years old.

By working together, we can enjoy safer holidays, travel, and protect our own health as well as the health of our family and friends.

COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing

Jackson County Public Health has added information on where parents and guardians can access the pediatric COVID-19 vaccine for their children on the [Jackson County COVID-19 Vaccination](#) website, [where to get vaccinated in Jackson County](#). This is not a comprehensive list. We encourage parents and guardians to reach out to their pediatric provider, primary care provider, and local pharmacy to see if they offer the vaccine to their patients and schedule appointments. Pediatric vaccinations require a parent or guardian's consent.

The COVID-19 vaccination and testing site at the Jackson County Expo will be closed the following days for closed from November 25-28 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Weekly Number of New COVID-19 Cases

For week 46 (November 14 –November 20), Jackson County Public Health reported 381 new COVID-19 cases. This is a 28% increase from the previous week.

COVID-19 Hospitalizations for Region 5 (Jackson and Josephine Counties)

As of 8:00 a.m. on November 22, 2021, the number of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 is 30, and there are 9 patients with COVID-19 in the intensive care unit.

The total number of patients in hospital beds may fluctuate between report times. The numbers do not reflect admissions per day nor the length of hospital stay. Staffing limitations are not captured in this data and may further limit bed capacity.

For more information:

- The public can call 211-information with general questions
- OHA Emerging Respiratory Disease page: www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus
- CDC COVID-19 page: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- OHA COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://govstatus.egov.com/or-oha-covid-vaccine>
- CDC COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
- Jackson County HHS Vaccine: <https://jacksoncountyor.org/hhs/COVID-19/COVID-19-News/covid-19-vaccine>
- CDC Travel within the U.S.: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>
- Jackson County Health and Human Services: <http://jacksoncountyor.org/hhs/COVID-19>
- Oregon COVID-19 Testing Location Finder: <https://govstatus.egov.com/or-oha-covid-19-testing>

###