



Pediatric COVID-19 trends in Wisconsin – Sept. 15

Each week, Children's Wisconsin will provide hospital census information to help our community better understand how respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), are impacting kids. As the only health system in the state dedicated to the health of kids, Children's Wisconsin has the largest pediatric intensive care unit in the state. Check back on Wednesdays for the latest update.

[VIDEO: Pediatric COVID-19 trends in Wisconsin – Sept. 15](#)

This week's takeaway

“Pediatric hospitals in other states are reporting a concerning number of kids hospitalized for COVID-19. We are not seeing the same at Children's Wisconsin. It is possible that will change over time, especially if the community does not take precautions we know work to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We are currently seeing a rise in other respiratory illnesses, such as RSV, which is unusual for this time of year. We are carefully watching these trends and will continue to share what we hope is helpful data to inform our community, leaders and staff. We continue to think about our colleagues and patients across the county, as our teams help care for the rising number of kids with respiratory illnesses.”

- Michael Gutzeit, MD, chief medical officer, Children's Wisconsin
- **Increase in positive COVID-19 cases, but not hospitalizations:** Children's Wisconsin saw an increase in the number of kids who tested positive for COVID-19 throughout our system, including at our Primary Care offices, in the Emergency Department, and at the hospital in Milwaukee, between July and August. Notably, Milwaukee County reports show that approximately 35 percent of new COVID-19 cases in the past seven days are in kids 17 years old and younger. Despite the increase in kids who tested positive through Sept. 14, Children's Wisconsin has not seen a significant increase in kids hospitalized due to COVID-19. Children's Wisconsin continues to have the capacity and depth of resources to provide critical services kids require, but like all health systems, we are making adjustments and accelerating hiring and onboarding efforts to meet staffing needs.
- **Other respiratory viruses:** The number of kids hospitalized with RSV, another contagious upper respiratory virus, continues to increase. Our volumes are in line with past viral surges we've seen, but the typical season for that is December through March. A concern is if this surge continues through the more typical viral season.
- **Mitigation:** In other parts of the country, schools in communities with lower vaccinations rates and less stringent mitigation efforts appear to experience more outbreaks. Until more kids age 12-17 receive the COVID-19 vaccine and the age eligibility is lowered, masks continue to be the best way to protect kids from COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.
- **The W's (and a V):** To decrease the chance of seeing a surge of hospitalized kids in Wisconsin due to COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses, we need everyone to **wear masks, watch their distance, wash their hands, work or attend school only when well**, and to **get the COVID-19 and flu vaccines** if they are eligible.
- **COVID-19 testing should occur through your primary care doctor or testing site.** Children's Wisconsin Emergency Department and Urgent Care locations are not COVID-19 community testing sites and need to focus on caring for the increased number of sick patients coming to those facilities. Families should only seek services at these locations when their kids need medical care. Many national pharmacy chains, University of Wisconsin campuses and community health centers are COVID-19 community test sites. To find a public testing location, visit the [Wisconsin Department of Health website](#).

Data

Average occupancy trends at Children’s Wisconsin Hospital-Milwaukee

The average occupancy at Children’s Wisconsin Hospital-Milwaukee, Sept. 8 to 14	
% of rooms occupied	% of rooms occupied in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)
68%	79%
% of patients in isolation with respiratory symptoms <i>(including COVID-19 and RSV)</i>	% of patients in isolation with a confirmed respiratory illness <i>(including COVID-19 and RSV)</i>
31%	24%

Respiratory virus trends seen at Children’s Wisconsin Hospital-Milwaukee

Average number of children admitted to Children’s Wisconsin Hospital-Milwaukee who tested positive with a respiratory virus, Sept. 8 to 14				
Average # hospitalized for:	COVID-19	RSV	Rhinovirus	Influenza
Week of Sept. 14	5	17	9	0

**Many children continue to be hospitalized for other conditions and also test positive for COVID-19. Through Sept. 14, a small number of Children’s Wisconsin patients are hospitalized primarily due to COVID-19.

Confirmed pediatric COVID-19 cases

Confirmed COVID-19 cases statewide for kids 0-17 based on [Wisconsin Department of Health Services database](#).

Confirmed COVID-19 cases statewide	Total	Age 0-3	Age 4-8	Age 9-13	Age 14-17
Week of Sept. 5	2,270	299	577	732	662
Week of Aug. 29	2,809	383	727	869	830
Week of Aug. 22	2,305	373	617	684	631
Week of Aug. 15	2,080	343	554	619	564

National and state context

- In Wisconsin, we saw a consistent increase in weekly confirmed COVID-19 cases in all age groups of kids through July and August. The week of Sept. 5 was the first decline in weekly confirmed cases for kids in Wisconsin. Next week will be an important week to determine if cases continue to trend downward, or if this was a temporary decrease.
- In Wisconsin, we have seen an overall increase of positive tests through July and August, but total cases in kids and adults are still less than what the state experienced in November and December of last year.
- While cases in Wisconsin have not hit what we experienced last fall, nationwide kids testing positive for COVID-19 in July and August was the highest it’s ever been. Hospitalizations for kids 0-17 years old are now 10 times higher than what was seen in June 2021.

- For the first time in this pandemic, some states are seeing an increase in kids hospitalized for COVID-19, including Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Tennessee and Ohio. Children’s Wisconsin has not seen a significant increase in hospitalizations at this time, but the possibility increases if the virus becomes more prevalent in our community.

State	Current hospitalization rate among those age 0-17	Previous highest hospitalization rate among those 0-17
Wisconsin	.23	.51 on Nov. 3
Illinois	.18	.31 on Nov. 11
Minnesota	.18	.42 on Dec. 11
Texas	.71	.92 on Sept. 4
Louisiana	.42	1.16 on Aug. 14
Florida	1.03	1.59 on Aug. 31
Tennessee	.68	1.12 on Sept. 5
Ohio	.52	.5 on Dec. 15

Current hospitalization rates are an average of how many kids, age 0-17, out of 100,000 are hospitalized. For example, on Nov. 3, an average of .51 children out of 100,000 were hospitalized in Wisconsin with COVID-19, though most of those kids were hospitalized for other reasons. To see more of this data, please visit the [COVID Data Tracker](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information and data specific to pediatric cases of COVID-19, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website](#).
