



## Pediatric COVID-19 trends in Wisconsin – Sept. 22

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.

### This week's takeaway

“COVID-19 activity in Wisconsin kids continues to be high, with twice the number of kids testing positive for the virus than one month ago. Children's Wisconsin continues to have capacity to care for Wisconsin kids, but I encourage families and school districts to reinforce the use of masks to decrease the spread of the virus. Over the next few weeks, experts at Children's Wisconsin and across the globe will have access to the data from the Pfizer-BioNTech clinical trial for the COVID-19 vaccine in kids age 5-11, including efficacy at lower doses of vaccine. This will help guide parents, caregivers and public health policy in anticipation of the FDA's October timeline for a decision on authorization. Until kids are able to be vaccinated, the best way to keep kids and our community safe is for adults to get vaccinated and for everyone to continue to wear masks.”

- Michael Gutzeit, MD, chief medical officer, Children's Wisconsin

- **Positive COVID-19 results in Wisconsin kids remain high:** COVID-19 positive cases in the state were higher than first reported last week. The last two weeks' data indicates twice the number of kids in the state tested positive for COVID-19 than how many tested positive just one month ago. Mirroring state-wide figures, Children's Wisconsin continues to see a high volume of kids testing positive for COVID-19 throughout our system.
- **Severe illness from COVID-19 in kids remains rare:** Children's Wisconsin has seen an increase in the amount of kids in the hospital who test positive for COVID-19, but most of them are asymptomatic and at the hospital for other reasons. Kids who test positive and have symptoms often have underlying health conditions and/or a diagnosis that makes them higher risk for complications from COVID-19.
- **Number of kids at Children's Wisconsin steady, but acuity increased slightly:** Children's Wisconsin continues to have capacity to care for kids, but is seeing a slight increase in the amount of care needed for those kids in the hospital.
- **Other respiratory viruses continue to be high:** The number of kids hospitalized with RSV, another contagious upper respiratory virus, and other respiratory viruses did not increase but continues to be very high for this time of year.
- **Pfizer-BioNTech publish data on COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial for kids 5-11:** Pfizer-BioNTech shared results of its COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial for kids 5-11. The company has stated they will apply for emergency use in this age group to the Food and Drug Administration by the end of month. This data will be publically available, which will help guide parents, caregivers and public health policy in anticipation of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) timeline for a decision on authorization in October. In Wisconsin, more than 210,000 kids age 12-17 have already received the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Children's Wisconsin Emergency Department and Urgent Care locations volumes continue to be high:** Some of the highest daily volumes have been experienced at Children's Wisconsin Emergency Department and Urgent Care locations in the past two weeks. Families are asked not to use these services if they are only seeking COVID-19 tests. 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](#).

- **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.

## Data

### Average occupancy trends at Children's Wisconsin Hospital-Milwaukee

The average occupancy at Children's Wisconsin Hospital-Milwaukee		
	% of rooms occupied	% of rooms occupied in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)
Sept. 15-21	68%	78%
Sept. 8-14	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>
Sept. 15-21	34%	26%
Sept. 8-14	31%	24%

### Respiratory virus trends seen at Children's Wisconsin Hospital-Milwaukee

Average daily number of children admitted to Children's Wisconsin Hospital-Milwaukee who tested positive with a respiratory virus				
Average # hospitalized with:	COVID-19	RSV	Rhinovirus	Influenza
Week of Sept. 21	9	15	11	0
Week of Sept. 14	5	17	9	0

### 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. 12	4,052	372	979	1,404	1,297
Week of Sept. 5	4,071*	460	1,039	1,328	1,244
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

\*Confirmed cases for the week of Sept. 5 were updated due to delayed reporting the previous week.

## National and state context

- In Wisconsin, we have seen an overall increase of positive tests through July, August and the first half of September. Total cases in kids and adults are still less than what the state experienced in November and December of last year. It will be important to see if cases continue to be high next week, or if we start to see a decrease.
- Iowa is the latest state to see an increase in its hospitalization rate for kids age 0-17. Some other states that saw high hospitalization rates for kids have started to plateau or decrease, but pediatric resources continue to be strained. Children's Wisconsin has not seen a significant increase in hospitalizations due to COVID-19 at this time, and did not see an increase from Sept. 12 to Sept. 19.
- 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.

State	Hospitalization rate age 0-17 (As of Sept. 19)	Previous highest hospitalization rate age 0-17
Wisconsin	.45	.51 on Nov. 3, 2020
Florida	.88	1.59 on Aug. 31, 2021
Illinois	.16	.31 on Nov. 11, 2020
Iowa	.81	.83 on Nov. 20, 2020
Louisiana	.41	1.16 on Aug. 14, 2021
Minnesota	.22	.42 on Dec. 11, 2020
Ohio	.9	.5 on Dec. 15, 2020
Tennessee	.51	1.12 on Sept. 5, 2021
Texas	.69	.92 on Sept. 4, 2021

*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-19 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](#).