



Pediatric COVID-19 trends in Wisconsin – Sept. 29

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

"The number of kids in Wisconsin with COVID-19 and the hospitalization rate of kids with COVID-19 in our state continue to steadily rise. The best way to stop this trajectory and protect our kids is through the precautions we already know work. I encourage families and school districts to reinforce the use of masks to decrease the spread of viruses, especially as we see a continued rise in COVID-19 and rhinovirus. Masks are our best tool for limiting disruptions to the school year. We are encouraged by the COVID-19 vaccine progress reported by Pfizer-BioNTech and look forward to being able to vaccinate kids age 5-11."

- Michael Gutzeit, MD, chief medical officer, Children's Wisconsin
- **Trajectory of COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin kids a concern:** The number of positive COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin kids continues to steadily increase. Mirroring state-wide figures, Children's Wisconsin continues to see a high volume of kids testing positive for COVID-19 throughout our system.
- **Mitigation is vital:** 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. Two recent studies published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide additional evidence that masks protect children from COVID-19, even when community rates are high and the contagious Delta variant is circulating.
- **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 may have mild symptoms or are hospitalized due to other reasons. While severe illness from COVID-19 remains rare, kids can still spread COVID-19 to others and the long-term effects of COVID-19 are unknown.
- **Number of kids at Children's Wisconsin remains steady:** Children's Wisconsin continues to have capacity to care for kids, with the percent of rooms occupied slightly increasing and percent of PICU rooms occupied remaining steady.
- **Other respiratory viruses continue to be high:** The number of kids hospitalized with other contagious respiratory viruses, including respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and rhinovirus, increased slightly compared to last week and continues to be very high for this time of year.
- **Pfizer-BioNTech submit data on COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial for kids 5-11:** Pfizer-BioNTech submitted data to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Tuesday indicating that its COVID-19 vaccine is safe for kids 5-11. The company has stated they will apply for emergency use in this age group to the FDA in the coming weeks. In Wisconsin, more than 213,000 kids age 12-17 have already received the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

- **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. 22-28	71%	78%
Sept. 15-21	68%	78%
Sept. 8-14	68%	79%
	% of patients in isolation with respiratory symptoms (including COVID-19 and RSV)	% of patients in isolation with a confirmed respiratory illness (including COVID-19 and RSV)
Sept. 22-28	37%	28%
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. 28	12	16	13	0
Week of Sept. 21	10	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	5,248	465	1,239	1,829	1,715
Week of Sept. 5	4,336	479	1,106	1,410	1,341
Week of Aug. 29	3,085	402	793	960	930
Week of Aug. 22	2,338	377	630	691	640
Week of Aug. 15	2,098	346	556	628	568

**This week's numbers are preliminary and will continue to be updated by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services throughout the week. They will be reported in next week's update.*

National and state context

- In Wisconsin, we continue to see an increase in positive COVID-19 tests. Total cases in kids and adults are less than what the state experienced in November and December of last year.
- However, the hospitalization rate of those age 0-17 is now close to the highest Wisconsin has seen. Based on preliminary data for this week, Wisconsin will surpass the previous highest hospitalization rate of those age 0-17 from November 2020.
- Most states saw an increase in hospitalization rates over the last month. Some southern states that recently saw high hospitalization rates for kids have started to plateau or decrease, but pediatric resources continue to be strained nationwide.

State	Hospitalization rate age 0-17 (As of Sept. 21)	Previous highest hospitalization rate age 0-17
Wisconsin	.50	.51 on Nov. 3, 2020
Florida	.83	1.61 on Aug. 30, 2021
Illinois	.15	.31 on Nov. 11, 2020
Iowa	.33	.83 on Nov. 20, 2020
Louisiana	.37	1.2 on Aug. 15, 2021
Minnesota	.20	.42 on Dec. 11, 2020
Ohio	1.01	.5 on Dec. 13, 2020
Tennessee	.53	1.12 on Sept. 5, 2021
Texas	.62	.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 many 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](#).