



MONOGRAM

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Immunization Update: **Respiratory Viruses**

Families should make informed decisions about healthcare including immunizations. This can be confusing because there is tension and disagreement over immunization policy and recommendations between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) under Secretary RFK Jr and most of the medical and public health world. In response to the federal Administration's politicization of the federal vaccine licensing and

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recommendation process, many states, including California, are making independent immunization recommendations for their residents.

California just passed a law authorizing the state health department, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to make recommendations for immunizations and other preventive health care, ensuring continued insurance coverage of valuable healthcare services. California has joined Oregon, Hawaii and Washington in a West Coast Health Alliance to jointly issue these recommendations, which are reviewed and agreed upon by each state's public health experts.

California, Oregon Hawaii and Washington endorse the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG), and the American Academy of Family Practice (AAFP) that COVID, flu and RSV vaccines are safe and important for the health of many.

Mono County Public Health endorses the recommendations of the West Coast Health Alliance and the medical professional societies, with the following key points:

Pregnant Mothers and Infants: The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) rejects Secretary Kennedy's unfounded pronouncement that COVID immunizations are no longer recommended during pregnancy. **ACOG recommends that all pregnant mothers receive a COVID booster** both because of the protective effect for new babies and because COVID in pregnancy can cause complications.

- Babies who get COVID are as likely to need hospitalization as elderly people 75 years and older.
- Very young babies are dependent upon antibodies received from their mothers for protection against infections.

Flu shots are also recommended for all pregnant women, in part for the sake of their newborns, as is **RSV immunization late in pregnancy** which is effective in preventing this potentially severe virus in babies.

- RSV is the number one cause of hospitalization for children under 2 years old.

Children: The American Academy of Pediatrics reviewed the effectiveness and safety of COVID immunization in children and continues to **recommend routine COVID immunization of young children between 6 months and 2 years old.** Older children with risk factors for severe COVID should also be immunized, as well as children who live with immune-compromised people and any child may be immunized whose parent desires it.

Influenza immunization is recommended for all children beginning at 6 months of age.

- Influenza killed almost 300 American children last flu season (2024-25), most of whom were healthy and not immunized.

RSV monoclonal antibodies are strongly recommended for infants whose mother did not received RSV immunization during pregnancy.

- Either maternal RSV immunization or infant receipt of RSV monoclonal antibodies are about 80% effective in keeping infants out of the hospital with RSV.

Adults: COVID boosters are recommended for people 65 and over. There is no disagreement on this point between federal and non-federal authorities.

In addition, the Western States Health Alliance and the American Academy of Family Practitioners (AAFP) recommend COVID boosters for most other adults, finding that benefits outweigh any risks. It is important that COVID immunizations remain available to all adults who wish to receive them.

- Severe COVID resulting in hospitalization remains a risk, although obviously lower than when COVID was new and we had little immunity.
- COVID infection increases the chances of heart disease and may increase risk of cognitive problems, including dementia.
- Immunization also reduces the chances of developing long COVID, with which millions of Americans, young and old, are struggling.

Flu shots are recommended annually for all people six months and older who choose to get them.

- Flu shots prevent thousands of deaths and tens of thousands of hospitalizations each year

RSV immunizations are recommended for all people over 74 years old, and people over 50 with risk factors for getting severe disease, as well as for pregnant people.

We believe that most families making well-informed decisions about their healthcare will choose immunization according to the recommendations of our medical societies and public health immunization resources. Not every person for whom these vaccinations are recommended will choose to pursue COVID, flu and RSV vaccination, but those who wish to receive these immunizations should be able to get them.

COVID, influenza and RSV vaccines should be available at pharmacies and doctors' offices.* California's new law is intended to ensure that each of these recommended vaccines is covered by all insurance plans. Mono County Public Health is currently conducting annual community influenza vaccination clinics.

**Note that Medicare Part D covers RSV in pharmacies but not in doctors' offices.*

Age/Condition	COVID-19	Influenza	RSV
Children 	✓ All 6-23 months ✓ All 2-18 years with risk factors or never vaccinated against COVID-19 ✓ All who are in close contact with others with risk factors¹ ✓ All who choose protection¹	✓ All 6 months and older	✓ All younger than 8 months² ✓ All 8-19 months with risk factors
Pregnancy 	✓ All who are planning pregnancy, pregnant, postpartum or lactating	✓ All who are planning pregnancy, pregnant, postpartum or lactating	✓ 32-36 weeks gestational age²
Adults 	✓ All 65 years and older ✓ All younger than 65 years with risk factors ✓ All who are in close contact with others with risk factors ✓ All who choose protection	✓ All	✓ All 75 years and older ✓ All 50-74 years with risk factors

1. COVID-19 vaccine is available for persons 6 months and older..

2. Protect infants with either prenatal RSV vaccine or infant dose of nirsevimab or clesovimab.

Source: California Department of Public Health