



August-22, 2025

A Late Summer Increase in COVID-19 Activity in Pennsylvania

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is sharing this Health Alert to make all individuals, providers, staff, and other caregivers aware of the latest Health Advisory from the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) regarding COVID-19. A late summer increase in COVID-19 activity in Pennsylvania is currently occurring.

The number of emergency department (ED) visits due to COVID-19 is going up statewide, especially in children under 5 and adults 65 years and older. COVID-19 hospital admissions increased steadily for three weeks, surpassing 200 admissions during the week ending 8/2/2025. Visit the Pennsylvania Respiratory Virus dashboard for more information, link provided below.

The current COVID-19 vaccine offers protection against circulating variants, including Nimbus and Stratus. The PA DOH encourages people who are eligible to get the COVID vaccine now, especially those at [higher risk](#), rather than waiting for the updated fall formulation. The updated vaccines are expected to be released later in 2025 but may not arrive soon enough to offer meaningful protection against the last summer/early fall wave. People should wait at least eight weeks between COVID vaccines and 12 weeks after having COVID infection. Those who are vaccinated using the 2024-2025 vaccine version should wait 8 weeks before receiving the updated 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine.

The PA DOH notes that:

- A late summer increase in COVID-19 activity in Pennsylvania is occurring.
- Based on national respiratory virus surveillance, test positivity for COVID-19 in PA has increased sharply in the past three weeks.

- Emergency department visits due to COVID-19 recently began to increase, particularly in children under age 5 year and adults over age 64 years.
- Late summer/early fall waves have occurred in the previous three seasons, peaking in September.
- Nirmatrelvir-ritonavir (Paxlovid) remains effective in preventing severe illness and should be prescribed promptly to patients with additional risk factors, such as diabetes or COPD.
- Recommend home COVID-19 tests to symptomatic patients who may not seek in-person care.
- If you have questions about this advisory, please contact the PA DOH at 877-PAHEALTH (877-724- 3258) or your local health department.

Current trends appear to be following a pattern that COVID-19 followed in the past three years, with peaks in September and again in January. The late summer/early fall wave typically begins in early June. Last year, the summer/fall wave was substantially larger than the winter wave. Schools, college campuses, travel, and indoor gatherings are known contributors to late summer/early fall respiratory virus transmission.

General Recommendations:

- Stay informed of local COVID-19 activity (PA DOH Respiratory Virus Dashboard).
- Encourage patients, especially those at increased risk, to stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Evaluate symptomatic patients promptly for COVID-19 and initiate antiviral therapy when indicated.
- Reinforce standard infection prevention and control practices in all healthcare settings.

- Encourage patients to have home tests available and use them at the onset of symptoms.
- Health care providers should stay current on vaccine education and communication best practices and share this knowledge with staff to ensure consistent information sharing.

Additional Resources:

CDC Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines:

- [Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines | COVID-19 | CDC](#)

COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines:

- [IDSA Guidelines on the Treatment and Management of Patients with COVID-19](#)
- [National Institutes of Health COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines Panel: Perspectives and Lessons Learned | Annals of Internal Medicine](#)

PA DOH Respiratory Virus Dashboard:

- [Respiratory Virus Dashboard | Department of Health | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#)

Vaccine Education:

- [Vaccine Update for HCP | Vaccine Education Center | CHOP](#)
- [Vaccine Confident Campaign Resources | American College of Preventative Medicine Talking with Vaccine Hesitant Parents | American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [Vaccination Courses for HCP: Debunk Misinformation and Bolster Vaccine Confidence | Vaccinate Your Family University](#)