

COVID-19 IMPACT ON IDAHO KIDS HEALTH

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Delta variant continues to cause deep concerns as more Idaho children test positive. New data shows the potential for negative long-term health and economic outcomes. With 24,000 children lacking health coverage, policymakers can help mitigate harms associated with the pandemic on children by supporting policies that increase access to quality health coverage and care.

COVID-19 In Idaho: Cases in Kids are on the Rise



- 1 in 10 positive cases in Idaho are now children. This percentage has been increasing at a faster rate with the more contagious Delta variant¹ and schools back in session.



- 237 Idaho children have been hospitalized for COVID-19.²



- While most children experience less severe COVID-19 symptoms than adults, those that need hospitalization are disproportionately already struggling with medical issues – chronic illnesses, cancer, congenital heart disease, seizure disorders, immune deficiencies, and Down’s syndrome.

Impacts to Health Care Services

Access to well child visits and other routine health care services are essential for children to grow up healthy and developmentally on track. With Idaho experiencing health care workforce shortages and hospitals in crisis standards of care due to COVID-19, there have been interruptions in routine pediatric care and decreased access to services for many children.



- The CDC reported that in 2020, routine immunizations decreased by 11.7 million doses compared to doses administered in 2019, meaning millions of kids across the country missed important immunizations.³



- In 2020, well child visits for kids age 3-5 decreased by nearly 40% nationally from pre-pandemic averages.⁴



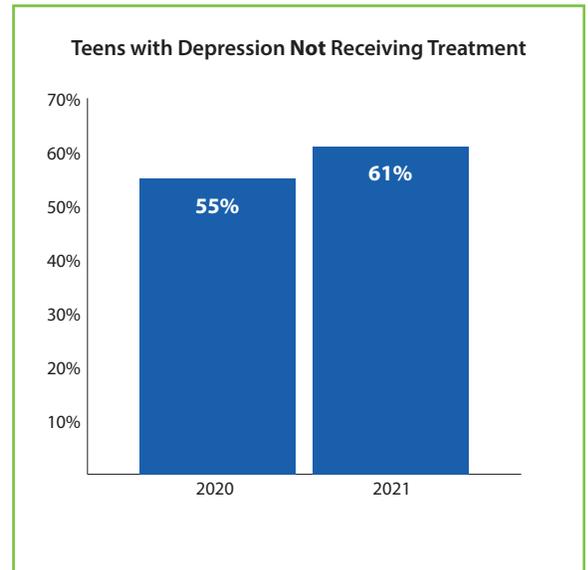
- Many Idaho children get their dental care solely through school based oral health programs. Even as schools have reopened, most districts have not resumed regular operations of the oral health program leaving many kids with no other options.



- In 2020, 55% of teens with depression did not receive treatment. This increased to 61% in 2021.⁵



- Kids with disabilities or chronic illnesses are the most likely to have severe cases of COVID-19. They also have had interruptions of their therapies and other critical services due to school shutdowns and a significant direct care workforce shortage.





Idaho Pediatrician Perspective:

Dr. Noreen Womack, "I saw a 15-month-old struggle with chronic ear infections and difficulty breathing at night because his surgery was postponed to care for the hundreds of unvaccinated COVID patients flooding the hospitals. A 15-year-old was denied transfer to a psychiatric facility after testing positive for COVID."

Unseen Impacts to Idaho Kids



Idaho doctors are reporting varying negative effects COVID-19 is having on the physical and mental health of children. Babies born to COVID-19 positive mothers at a higher risk of being premature, stillborn and requiring more intensive medical treatment and longer hospital stays.⁶



1 in 5 Idaho teens experienced depression in 2020, the second highest rate in the country.⁷ The pandemic has been incredibly stressful and socially isolating for teens.



Families are navigating the unpredictable and unprecedented changes caused by pandemic in work, school, social activities, quarantines and providing the basic needs for their children. Children are having Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), potentially traumatic events that occur early in life, like abuse or neglect for example. Research shows that kids who have a high ACE scores are more likely to develop chronic illness and have negative economic outcomes later in life. Pediatricians are calling COVID-19 the "new ACE" due to the significant stressful events children are experiencing.



500 Idaho children experienced the death of a primary caregiver, this data was collected before the recent Delta variant surge likely making this number is even higher.⁸ This is the type of trauma that will affect a child for the rest of their life.

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Precautions to Protect Kids from Contracting COVID-19



- School districts taking precautionary measures are experiencing lower rates of COVID-19 infections. For example, the Boise School District (a district with mask guidance for students) had a positivity rate of 17% during a week in September 2021, compared to the Nampa School District (no mask guidance) that had a positivity rate 31%.⁹



- COVID-19 vaccination rates are low in eligible Idaho youth. 30% of youth ages 12-15 are vaccinated, and 36% of youth ages 16-17 are vaccinated.¹⁰ COVID-19 vaccines are safe and proven effective for children, vaccinated kids are less likely to spread the virus and far less likely to experience severe cases.



- CDC research found that COVID-19 vaccines are incredibly effective at preventing hospitalization among kids; unvaccinated teens are 10 times more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 than vaccinated ones, and nearly 100% of youth hospitalizations occur in unvaccinated kids.¹¹

We Can Act Now to Keep Idaho Kids Safe

Policymakers can mitigate the negative health impacts of the pandemic on children by supporting policies and programs that keep kids healthy, ensure consistent health coverage and access to health care services.



- Programs like Medicaid and CHIP help Idaho children access health coverage when they have no other coverage options. As more families navigate the financial difficulties caused by COVID-19, Medicaid and CHIP are there to ensure children can get the health care services they need and deserve.



- COVID-19 preventative measures like vaccines and wearing masks are proven to be the best way that we can protect children from the negative impacts of the virus. As a community, let's come together and protect Idaho kids.

1. [DPH Idaho COVID-19 Dashboard: Data Current as of 10/15/21.](#)

2. [DPH Idaho COVID-19 Dashboard: Data Current as of 10/15/21.](#)

3. [CDC: 'Clinical Considerations for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccination in Adolescents'. 2021.](#)

4. [American Academy of Pediatrics and Georgetown Center for Children and Families. 'Urgent Action Needed to Catch Up on Routine Childhood Vaccinations'. 2021.](#)

5. [Mental Health America. Children Mental Illness State Rankings. 2020.](#)

6. [Idaho Statesman. 'Mom deaths, sick infants, more stillbirths: COVID-19 affects Idaho pregnancies'. 2021.](#)

7. [Mental Health America. Children Mental Illness State Rankings. 2020.](#)

8. [American Academy of Pediatrics. 'COVID-19-Associated Orphanhood and Caregiver Death in the United States'. 2021.](#)

9. [Primary Health. 'Positivity Rate by School District'. September 30th COVID-19 Briefing.](#)

10. [DPH Idaho COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard: Data Current as of 10/15/21.](#)

11. [CDC. 'Effectiveness of Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA Vaccination Against COVID-19 Hospitalization Among Persons Aged 12-18 Years — United States, June-September 2021'. 2021.](#)

