I Raise the Rates! November Edition

In this edition of I Raise the Rates (IRtR), you will find a variety of new resources from several public health partners, educational opportunities, and a selection of media articles related to immunization.

Updates from the American College of Physicians (ACP)

ACP Partners with YouTube to Launch New Video Series Focused on COVID-19

ACP launched a new video series, Ask Your Internist, where physicians answer the public's top questions about vaccines. This video series was created in partnership with YouTube as part of a broader effort to develop educational content to counter misinformation around COVID-19 and routine adult vaccines. The first video, "Why Trust COVID-19 Vaccines?" features Dr. Frances Ferguson, a practicing internal medicine physician based in Georgia, who shares her journey from being skeptical about the coronavirus vaccines to trusting them enough to get vaccinated and recommending the COVID-19 vaccines to her patients.

Opportunity to Participate in ACP Quality Improvement Initiative to Increase Adult Influenza Immunization Rates
ACP is recruiting internal medicine, subspecialty practices, and residency programs to participate in the *I Raise the Rates* quality improvement programs to increase influenza and adult immunization rates. ACP’s *I Raise the Rates program*, which is supported by funding from the CDC, Merck, and GSK, provides QI education and virtual coaching support from ACP Advance expert coaches to support increased adult immunization coverage. The program also offers access to a virtual learning community, tailored educational offerings, and the opportunity to earn more than 54 CME and ABIM MOC credits for program participants. Onboarding is underway so act now! This opportunity is limited, applicants will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please see the recruitment flyer for more information about participation benefits and requirements as well as the application link.

View the Flyer Here

Keep Up with Influenza This Season:
**CDC’s FluView Surveillance Reports Posted Weekly**

Influenza season has begun. CDC expects influenza activity, which is currently low, to increase in the coming weeks or months. CDC’s [Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report, FluView](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly), provides a valuable snapshot of influenza activity state-by-state. Visit it regularly to stay informed about influenza in your community this season.

Learn More

**Three New Publications Available On the Risks of COVID-19 During Pregnancy**
Three new studies emphasize the known risks of COVID-19 illness during pregnancy and have found increases in these risks associated with the spread of the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Pregnant or recently pregnant people are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including ICU admission, ventilator use, and death. People with COVID-19 during pregnancy are also at increased risk for preterm birth and stillbirth and might be more likely to experience other pregnancy complications.

In July 2021, the Delta variant became the predominant variant in the United States and led to the fourth wave of COVID-19. Using three different data sources, these recent reports found increases in the risks for pregnant people with COVID-19 during the Delta period when the variant was rapidly spreading:

- One Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) describes an observed increase in the number of reported deaths in Mississippi among women who had COVID-19 during pregnancy during July–October 2021, in the Delta period. None of the women were fully vaccinated. [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7047e2.htm?s_cid=mm7047e2_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7047e2.htm?s_cid=mm7047e2_w)

- A second MMWR examines the risk for stillbirth among pregnant women with documented COVID-19 at the delivery hospitalization and found that compared with women without COVID-19, women with COVID-19 were four times as likely to have a stillbirth during the Delta period. The findings also suggest that the severity of maternal illness affects the risk of stillbirth associated COVID-19, which increased during the Delta period. [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7047e1.htm?s_cid=mm7047e1_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7047e1.htm?s_cid=mm7047e1_w)

- A third study found that for pregnant women with COVID-19 during the Delta period, the risk of ICU admission was 66% higher, the risk of needing a ventilator or special equipment to breathe was 63% higher, and the risk of death was more than two times higher than in the pre-Delta period. The risk for severe illness also increased for non-pregnant women of reproductive age (15—44 years) with COVID-19 during the Delta period, compared with the pre-Delta period. [https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-1090075/v1](https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-1090075/v1)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages people who are pregnant, recently pregnant, trying to become pregnant, or might become pregnant in the future to get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect themselves and their babies from COVID-19. Pregnant women should choose a COVID-19 vaccine based on their personal preferences, after discussing the benefits and risks with their healthcare provider.
themselves and their baby. CDC also encourages healthcare providers serving these patients to talk to them about the importance of getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

**Updated COVID-19 Booster Recommendations from the CDC**

CDC has expanded recommendations for booster shots to include all adults ages 18 years and older who received a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA) COVID-19 vaccine as part of their primary series following the ACIP meeting on Friday, November 19, 2021.

Updated recommendations for booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines include:

- All adults ages 18 years and older who received a primary mRNA COVID-19 vaccine series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) are now eligible to receive a booster dose at least six months after completing their primary mRNA vaccine series.

In addition, ACIP updated recommendations for the groups who **should** receive a booster shot at least six months after completing their primary mRNA COVID-19 vaccine series to include:

- Persons aged 50 years and older
- Residents ages 18 years and older in long-term care settings

Recommendations for Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen COVID-19 vaccine remain the same:

- Everyone 18 years and older who received a J&J/Janssen vaccine at least two months ago should get a booster shot.
Findings from the phase 3 B7471004 study (NCT04526574) evaluating the immunogenicity and safety of pneumococcal 20-valent conjugate vaccine (Prevnar 20) coadministered with the seasonal influenza vaccine in adults 65 years, and older showed positive top-line results, according to a statement from Pfizer.

A total of 1796 participants were enrolled and randomized in the study, with 1727 completing the study across 66 investigator sites in the United States. The responses provoked by Prevnar 20 for all 20 serotypes and by the seasonal influenza vaccine when given together were non-inferior to those elicited by the vaccines when administered one (1) month apart. Further, the safety profile of Prevnar 20 was similar when the vaccines were coadministered compared with when each was administered separately, one (1) month apart, according to the study.

CDC Tracking Flu in Young Adults

While overall flu activity is still low in the United States, the number of laboratory-confirmed influenza infections continue to increase. More than 90 percent of the cases have been detected in children and young adults, and CDC’s system for monitoring influenza-like-illness (ILI) shows hot spots of activity in several urban centers home to large colleges or universities.

While most of the laboratory-confirmed influenza infections have been influenza A(H3N2) virus infections, laboratory data suggest ILI activity is a result of varying levels of flu and other respiratory viruses.

On college campuses, flu viruses are known to spread rapidly in close quarters like common living spaces, classrooms, shared restrooms, and through social activities. Despite this, young adults consistently have the lowest flu vaccination coverage every flu season in the United States. For example, a CDC Epi-Aid that is supporting a local investigation into an outbreak of H3N2 flu at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor has found nearly 700 students, faculty, and staff have tested positive for influenza since October 6, 2021, but only about one-quarter of them had been vaccinated.
Millions of Americans are now eligible to get a COVID-19 booster dose. The following communications resources — including topline talking points, answers to tough questions, sample social media posts, and graphics — can help you answer questions about COVID-19 vaccine booster doses and support your local vaccination outreach.

Access the Resources Here

Upcoming CME Webinar Opportunity:
Adult Influenza Immunization

Join the NJIN team on December 16th, from 1:00 - 2:00 PM EST, to hear Dr. Margaret "Meg" Fisher of the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) present on adult influenza immunization.

The learning objectives for this webinar include:

- Articulate the importance of increasing flu vaccination coverage for adult patients
- Understand the rationale for continuing to vaccinate against flu throughout the winter
- Identify best practices to safely administer vaccines during a pandemic
- Discuss the technology and background behind flu vaccines and influenza viruses

Register Today!

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