

# The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

October 2021



## Drive the Monster Mile and receive COVID-19 vaccine on October 16 and 17

Up to 800 drivers who pre-register for a COVID-19 vaccination at Dover International Speedway as part of the “[Race to End COVID](https://www.racetoendcovid.org)” can drive two laps on the Monster Mile. The free event is sponsored by Dover International Speedway, the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) and the CDC Foundation.

Vaccination appointments – with or without driving the track – are available on Saturday, October 16, 2021 between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and on Sunday, October 17, 2021 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccines are offered for first or second doses and the additional doses recommended for some groups. Testing (without driving) is also available. Pre-register at <https://www.racetoendcovid.org/event/dover-international-speedway/>.

Drivers ages 16 and older with a valid driver’s license, who are vaccinated that weekend, can drive their own vehicle behind the track’s pace car in groups of up to 25 vehicles.

## Get vaccinated for flu by October 31

The Division of Public Health (DPH) recommends that Delawareans get their annual flu vaccinations by October 31. Those who did not yet receive a COVID-19 vaccination can get the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine during the same visit.

Flu vaccines are available at pharmacies, participating medical provider offices, and Federally Qualified Health Centers, and DPH’s community-based COVID-19 vaccination events. Individuals without insurance or those on Medicaid or Medicare may receive flu and COVID-19 vaccinations at Public Health clinics.

For more information about flu vaccines in Delaware, visit [flu.delaware.gov](https://flu.delaware.gov) or call 1-800-282-8672.

## Providers administering booster doses of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

Vaccine providers can now administer booster doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to certain populations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

Based on CDC recommendations, the following people **should** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine at least six months after their second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech:

- People 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings
- People age 50 to 64 years with underlying medical conditions, which include but are not limited to: cancer, chronic heart, lung, and kidney diseases; dementia, diabetes, down syndrome, HIV, overweight and obesity, pregnancy, organ transplants, and stroke.

CDC recommends the following individuals **may** also receive Pfizer-BioNTech’s booster shot:

- People age 18 to 49 years with underlying medical conditions (the same categories as mentioned above), based on their individual benefits and risk.
- People age 18 to 64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting, including health care workers, teachers and day care staff, grocery workers and those in homeless shelters or prisons, among others.



Donald A. Williams of Wilmington gets a COVID-19 vaccine in February 2021. DPH photo.

Delawareans with certain immunocompromising conditions including those who have received organ or stem cell transplants, are undergoing treatment for HIV or cancer, or who are taking medication that suppresses the immune system, are currently eligible to receive an additional (third dose) of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccines if their second dose was administered at least 28 days prior.

Visit [de.gov/getmyvaccine](https://de.gov/getmyvaccine) for vaccine providers.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
Division of Public Health

## Toothbrushing books gifted to pediatricians

Literacy and good oral health habits for very young children are being promoted by the Division of Public Health's Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services (BOHDS) and the Delaware Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (DEAAP). The DEAAP recently established an Early Literacy Committee tasked with engaging and supporting Delaware primary care pediatricians to promote early literacy from birth to five years.

The organizations are distributing the *Brush, Brush, Brush* book to pediatric practices that are implementing the evidence-based Reach Out and Read (ROR) literacy program. The book, to be distributed during the 12-month well-child visit, promotes healthy habits using rhyme to engage and inspire little ones to brush their teeth. Its back cover has a sticker with the BOHDS' Help Line to help families find a dentist for their child by age 1.

"The age 1 dental visit creates an opportunity for early identification of any developmental issues and preventive needs," said Dr. Nick Conte, DPH dental director. "More importantly, it helps to foster a home environment where oral health is valued, and families have the knowledge and skills necessary to stay healthy and decay free."

Pediatric practices expressing an interest in distributing the book will be contacted by a dental hygienist who will coordinate book delivery, engage in oral health conversations around available resources and supplies; and training for risk assessment and fluoride varnish application, as requested by the practice.

Stacey G. Fox, MD, FAAP, Chair of the DEAAP Early Literacy Committee said the fun gift provides two essential messages simultaneously: the importance of reading with your child every day and how to keep their brand-new teeth healthy and strong.

For dental resources in Delaware, visit <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/hsm/files/dentalresourceguide.pdf>. For assistance locating a dentist, call the Oral Health Services Help Line at 302-622-4540.



## COVID-19 vaccination helps protect kids from infection and hospitalization

Positive COVID-19 cases in children are rising statewide, especially in areas with low vaccination rates. The Division of Public Health (DPH) reports that as of October 10, 2021, the rate of positive COVID-19 cases per 10,000 population among school age children (5 to 17 years) is 1,299.7 in New Castle County, 1,173.7 in Kent County, and 1,377.6 in Sussex County. According to [My Healthy Community](#), 48.1 percent of 12 to 17 year-old Delawareans were fully vaccinated for COVID-19 as of October 10, 2021.

"If we can prevent children from becoming infected, we should," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay, a board-certified pediatrician. "Vaccination is our best tool to prevent COVID-19 infections and unnecessary suffering. Wearing face masks helps protect very young children who cannot yet be vaccinated."

COVID-19 infection in some children can be so severe that they require hospitalization. While children with underlying health conditions are most at risk for severe illness, approximately 30 percent of children hospitalized with COVID-19 in the U.S. have no underlying health condition. At least 430 children in the U.S. have died from COVID-19.

Also of concern is Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in children (MIS-C), a rare but serious condition associated with COVID-19 that requires hospital care. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 5,217 MIS-C cases nationwide and 46 deaths since reporting began in 2020. For more information about MIS-C, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/mis/mis-c.html>.

[Click here](#) for a list of COVID-19 vaccination sites.



**Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021**  
**10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**



[takebackday.dea.gov/](https://takebackday.dea.gov/)

## Eat fruits, vegetables, and healthy foods to reduce anxiety and boost immunity

Consuming ample amounts of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods every day can reduce anxiety and boost immunity. The Division of Public Health's Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Section recommends trying these dietary suggestions from Harvard University:

- Beans, fruits, berries, nuts, vegetables, ginger, and turmeric are antioxidants which can help support your immune system and lower anxiety.
- Citrus fruit and red bell peppers are both rich in vitamin C, which in some [studies](#) has been shown to support the immune system.
- Spices from ginger, garlic, turmeric, and capsaicin (from chili peppers) are immunity boosters and can be easily added to soups, stews, stir-frys, or salad and salad dressings.
- Stress can deplete [magnesium](#) levels, so eat magnesium-rich foods like legumes, nuts, seeds, and leafy greens to feel calmer and support the immune system.

When someone begins to feel increased stress and tension, they should avoid drugs and alcohol which



can create additional problems and increase stress levels. Eating healthy, exercising, and getting plenty of sleep are recommended for those who feel anxious or stressed. Instead of over-indulging on a treat you are trying to avoid, vent to a "stress buddy."

Visit Harvard University at

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/eating-during-covid-19-improve-your-mood-and-lower-stress-2020040719409>) and <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/nutritional-strategies-to-ease-anxiety-201604139441>.

For more information about healthy diets, read the 9<sup>th</sup> Edition of the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025, December 2020](#), recently released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For tips on coping with stress, visit the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/copingwith-stresstips.html>.



Felicia Cruz, RN, APRN, AG-CNS, RN-BC, a geriatric clinical nurse specialist with Bayhealth provides information and giveaways about preventing falls to Mary Riordan, 69, of Dover. The Falls Prevention Team organized a resource fair at the Modern Maturity Center on September 22. Photo by Donna Sharp.

## Falls Prevention Team shares advice

Falls can be disabling and are the leading cause of traumatic brain injuries in the United States, particularly among older adults and young children, according to the Mayo Clinic.

The Delaware Coalition for Injury Prevention's Falls Prevention Team advises seniors to get regular vision and hearing checkups, eat nutritious foods and beverages, stay hydrated, get regular exercise, and discuss their fall risk with their health care provider. Delawareans of all ages should wear shoes that fit well and are in good condition. Canes and walkers should be fitted to the user.

The Falls Prevention Team also recommends keeping homes, yards, and public areas clutter free and maintaining walkways to ensure a smooth, non-slippery surface. Use motion-activated lights indoors and outdoors when possible or use night lights inside. Install handrails, ramps, and automatic doors.

Enroll older Delawareans in classes to improve coordination and balance. For a schedule of A Matter of Balance<sup>®</sup> classes, call Volunteer Delaware 50+ at 302-255-9882 in New Castle County and 302-515-3020 in Kent and Sussex counties. ChristianaCare offers BingoCize, an evidence-based program integrating Bingo and exercise, and ThinkFirst to Prevent Falls<sup>®</sup>, which can be done virtually or in person. To schedule, contact [injuryprevention@christianacare.org](mailto:injuryprevention@christianacare.org).

To learn more about preventing falls, visit the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/steady/index.html> and the National Council on Aging at <https://www.ncoa.org>.