

The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

September 2022

Public Health Alert Web portal provides COVID-19, monkeypox, and flu updates

To provide information about current public health issues of elevated concern, the Division of Public Health (DPH) launched a Public Health Alert web portal, de.gov/PublicHealthAlerts, on September 1.

The user-friendly central landing page provides access to the COVID-19, monkeypox, and flu web pages. COVID-19 information can still be found at de.gov/coronavirus, monkeypox information can still be found at de.gov/monkeypox, and flu information can still be found at flu.delaware.gov.

A new webpage to provide information about monkeypox was also unveiled at the same time. As of September 13, 34 cases of monkeypox were reported to DPH. The cases are among 33 men and one woman and range in age from 18 to 64. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) reported 21,985 monkeypox cases in the U.S. as of September 12, with Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C. each having between 457 and 649 cases.

The JYENNOS vaccine, approved by the Food & Drug Administration for use against smallpox, is authorized for use with monkeypox in high-risk and immunocompromised individuals. Nearly 1,000 individuals in Delaware had received one dose of the two-dose series as of September 13. Vaccine appointments can be scheduled at NewarkUrgentCare.org and beebehealthcare.org/online-scheduling. To schedule a vaccine appointment at a DPH clinic, call the monkeypox hotline at 866-408-1899. A screening evaluation will be conducted first.

Visit de.gov/monkeypox for vaccine eligibility requirements, vaccine clinic locations, a medical providers section, and flyers in English and Spanish.

For more information, call the monkeypox hotline at 866-408-1899 Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or email questions to DPHCall@delaware.gov.



Bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine now available in Delaware

Updated COVID-19 vaccine booster doses, called bivalent boosters, are now available to individuals who completed their primary vaccination series (two doses of Pfizer, Moderna or Novovax, or one dose of Johnson & Johnson) two months earlier. The Moderna and Pfizer bivalent boosters target two strains of COVID-19 – the original strain of the virus and two of the Omicron variants (BA.4 and BA.5), the current most widespread variants in the world.

Individuals may choose either the Pfizer or Moderna bivalent booster, regardless of which primary series vaccine or original booster dose they had previously.

The Pfizer bivalent booster is currently authorized for ages 12 and older; while Moderna's is currently authorized for 18 years of age and older. With back to school and other group activities now occurring, DPH asks parents of children under age 12 to have their children complete the primary COVID-19 vaccine series and get the original monovalent booster to protect them. At a minimum, completing a child's primary series now will make children eligible for the bivalent booster when it is approved for younger children.

Since the Omicron variants are widely circulating, DPH encourages eligible Delawareans to get the bivalent boosters to protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

Bivalent boosters are currently available at DPH clinics. Visit de.gov/getmyvaccine or vaccines.gov for other locations.

For more information, visit de.gov/boosters, email questions to DPHCall@delaware.gov, or call 866-408-1899 Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Those who are deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf-Blind or speech disabled can contact DPH by dialing 711 first using specialized devices (i.e. TTY, TeleBraille, voice devices).



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health



DPH re-accredited as nationally accredited public health agency

The Division of Public Health (DPH) is among only 22 percent of the accredited public health departments in the country to earn continued accreditation this year. The national Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) re-accredited DPH on August 18. To maintain its accreditation status, DPH demonstrated that it meets PHAB's quality standards and measures. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifies accreditation as a critical strategy for strengthening public health infrastructure.

"After 2½ years of the COVID-19 pandemic, Delawareans have learned how important it is to have a strong public health response in our state," said Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Secretary Molly Magarik. "I am grateful to the Public Health Accreditation Board for this re-accreditation, but I am especially grateful to the employees of the Division of Public Health for the work they have done and continue to do during the pandemic, and the work they do every day to evolve, improve and advance the health of Delawareans. This is another way we are building a healthier and stronger Delaware."

DPH Interim Director Dr. Rick Hong expressed gratitude to outgoing Associate Deputy Director Cassandra Codes-Johnson and Office of Performance Management Director Matthew Whitman for their dedication and tireless work in spearheading the re-accreditation process. Additionally, he recognized the work of former DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay in building a strong foundation within the Division which led to DPH's initial accreditation in June 2016.

For more information, read the press release at <https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/pressreleases/2016/dphaccreditation-060816.html>.

Refresh household emergency kits

Household emergency kits should be refreshed once or twice per year. Fall is a good time to undertake that task, beginning with canned goods.

[PrepareDE.org](https://www.preparede.org) recommends that kits have at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and a can opener. As temperatures cool, stores typically offer sales on canned soup, tomato sauce, and canned meats. Pre-Thanksgiving sales feature canned vegetables and evaporated and condensed milk.

Every week, buy a few extra cans, reaching to the back of the store shelf for cans with the longest expiration dates. Pop-top cans do not require a can opener. Put those cans aside, using a dedicated indoor shelf. Place items with the nearest expiration date at the front and use them first.

Begin your household emergency kit with the following items:

- One gallon of drinking water per person per day
- Food – non-perishable, three-day supply
- Can opener, mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels, plastic utensils, and garbage bags
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio, flashlight, battery-powered lantern, extra batteries, heavy work gloves, and a whistle
- First aid kit and personal items, such as medications, glasses, dentures and cleaner, and hearing aids.
- Toilet paper, feminine supplies, and diapers
- Disinfecting wipes and disposable face masks
- Soap, shampoo, hand sanitizer, moist towelettes, toothbrush and toothpaste
- Cash because ATM machines may not work
- Cell phone power bank or car charger
- Copy of important documents in waterproof portable container or sealed Ziploc® bags
- Recent photos of family members in waterproof portable container or sealed Ziploc® bags
- For each person, a seasonally appropriate change of clothing and rain gear
- Fire extinguisher.

Read the complete checklist at <https://www.preparede.org/make-a-kit/>.





The Angle Measuring Tool uses visual, sound, and vibration cues to set an extension ladder at the proper angle. For the free app, visit the App Store, Google Play, or www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/mobileapp.html.

Preventing falls eliminates traumatic injuries, lost work, and health care costs

Falls can result in broken bones, head injuries, and temporary or permanent disabilities leading to major life changes for the individual and their families. Governor John Carney and Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long have proclaimed September 18-24, 2022, as Falls Prevention Awareness Week.

Falls are the leading cause of trauma-related hospitalizations in U.S. adults aged 65 and older, with one in four in that age group falling every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In 2021, 1,833 seniors over the age of 64 fell and were seen at a Delaware trauma center, according to the Delaware Trauma Registry.

The Delaware Coalition for Injury Prevention's (DCIP) Falls Prevention Team recommends older adults reduce their risk of falling by engaging in consistent physical activity and balance exercises, getting regular hearing and vision exams, receiving appropriate nutrition and sleep, having medication reviews with their doctor or pharmacist, and keeping homes and yards clutter-free, well-lit, and modified as needed. In the community, ramps and walkways should be maintained and well-lit.

To improve coordination and balance, older Delawareans can enroll in A Matter of Balance[®] classes. For a schedule, call Volunteer Delaware 50+ at 302-515-3020. To schedule the fall prevention programs BingoCize and ThinkFirst to Prevent Falls[®], send an email to Christiana Care at injuryprevention@christianacare.org. For free family and provider resources, visit the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/steady/index.html>.

Household upgrades can reduce falls

Making small household upgrades can benefit all household members, especially seniors and those at risk of falling. Use these suggestions:

- Change faucets and doorknobs to levers, which individuals with arthritis or less dexterity can grasp more easily.
- Make flooring transitions seamless by eliminating door thresholds. Flush entryways accommodate those with mobility challenges.
- Remove unnecessary furniture, rugs, and clutter to widen walkable corridors and lessen the risk of falling.
- Install grab rails and supports in showers, near toilets, and close to kitchen seating. Hire a professional to install grab bars properly.
- Use smart lighting that is activated by motion or darkness. Rocker light switches are easier to push than smaller toggle switches.
- Install a stair-lift for individuals with fall risks who are advised not to use stairs.

Falls Prevention Team hosts free movie and health fair September 20

On September 20, the Falls Prevention Team and the Modern Maturity Center (MMC) will show the movie "Denying Gravity." The movie highlights in a relatable, good-humored approach the benefits of fall prevention activities for seniors. A small health fair with information on preventing falls precedes the movie.

The entire event is free and open to the public and runs from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the MMC, located at 1121 Forrest Avenue in Dover, Delaware. Registration is not required.

Should movie-goers choose to stay for lunch in the Longwood Dining Room, the cost is \$6 for ages 60+ and \$9 for ages 59 and younger. Visit www.modern-maturity.org for more information.

