

## State-run Vaccination Sites Now Offering Bivalent Booster Vaccines for Children Ages 5-11

Governor Tim Walz today announced that Minnesotans can schedule appointments for children ages 5-11 to receive an updated bivalent booster at state-run vaccination sites. The announcement follows updated recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that expanded the use of updated (bivalent) COVID-19 vaccines to children ages 5 through 11 years to protect them against newer Omicron variants.

**“We’re glad this younger age group can now benefit from the added protection of this updated booster to fight COVID-19,”** said Governor Walz. **“Making sure our kids are vaccinated can help them safely enjoy the school year, spend time with friends and family, and participate in all of the fun fall and winter activities our state has to offer.”**

Vaccination will start this week at the state-run vaccination sites at Mall of America, Duluth, Moorhead, Rochester, and St. Paul. Parents can start making appointments now.

All state-run vaccination sites will offer the Pfizer bivalent boosters. Appointments are recommended but walk ins will be accepted.

**“Having the updated bivalent booster available for children between ages 5 and 11 means we have another opportunity to protect this younger age group. The updated COVID-19 booster has been specifically formulated to protect against the original COVID-19 strain and the newer Omicron variants that have been making children and adults sick in recent months,”** said Minnesota Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm. **“The bivalent boosters were shown to be safe, and they produce antibodies against Omicron, so they will be a crucial tool for protecting our state in the months ahead. Now is a good time to make sure you and your children ages 5 and older are up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines and any other vaccines you need, like the annual flu shot.”**

Bivalent boosters were initially authorized for people 12 and older in September. With the expanded recommendations from the federal government last week, the Pfizer bivalent booster is now available for people 5 and older and the Moderna bivalent vaccine is now available for people 6 and older.

Both products can be given as soon as two months after a primary vaccine series or booster vaccination. Children 5-11 receive a smaller dose than people age 12 and older. The bivalent vaccines are only recommended for use as a booster.

In addition to state-run vaccination sites, Minnesotans can find updated bivalent boosters through Minnesota pharmacies, health care systems, local public health and tribal health agencies, and other health care providers. Doses have begun shipping and providers are expected to start taking appointments for this younger age group once they receive their doses and have reviewed the updated CDC recommendations.

These boosters will continue to be free for all Minnesotans at both state and private sites, regardless of insurance status.