



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc
Commissioner

December 2021

Dear Families,

As the holidays approach, we wish all our families a safe and healthy holiday season. We know that COVID-19 delta and omicron variants may be on your mind and we want to make it clear that the health and safety of children, families, and school staff is our highest priority. Vaccination is our best tool in maintaining safer schools and defending against COVID-19. If you have a child who is age 5 or older and not yet vaccinated, we strongly encourage you to get them vaccinated as soon as possible with the Pfizer vaccine (the only vaccine authorized for children ages 5-17).

As a reminder, if your child is fully vaccinated, they do not need to quarantine and miss school if exposed to a person with COVID-19. As long as your child is fully vaccinated (meaning that it has been at least 2 weeks since the second COVID-19 vaccine shot) and does not have COVID-19 symptoms, they can attend in-person school after being exposed.

In addition, we strongly recommend that all children receive the annual flu vaccine. The flu and COVID-19 are expected to circulate at the same time this season. Getting a flu vaccine reduces the chance of serious illness and hospitalization due to the flu and has been shown to save children's lives. Getting both vaccines is important, because the flu vaccine does not protect against COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccine does not protect against flu. Your child can receive the flu vaccine at the same time as other vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine. You can check with your child's medical provider to schedule a vaccination appointment or find vaccine sites for both flu and COVID-19 vaccines at nyc.gov/vaccinefinder. You can also call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) for help finding a vaccination site.

Once your child is vaccinated against COVID-19, you can share an image of your child's vaccination card, NYS Excelsior Pass or other official record with your child's school so the school knows your child does not have to quarantine if they are a close contact to a person with COVID-19.

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccines, visit nyc.gov/covidvaccine.

We wish you and your family a very happy and safe holiday season.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave A. Chokshi'.

Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc
Commissioner

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene