

# UW Health: Says rise in youth hospitalizations makes clear the need for kids to be vaccinated

Posted on Tuesday, Jan 4, 2022

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MADISON, Wis. – In Wisconsin and across the United States children face a dangerous reality; pediatric COVID-19 vaccination lags behind other age groups while hospitalizations of children are on the rise in many parts of the country.

In the U.S., the seven-day average of hospitalizations for children ages 0 to 17 was 574 per 100,000 between Dec. 26 and Jan. 1. In the previous week hospitalizations were at an average of 294, an increase of about 96% in just one week, according to [data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Additionally, another recent CDC [study](#) showed most children admitted to six children's hospitals in the U.S. over the summer during the spread of the delta variant were unvaccinated.

All this data show that there is a glaring need to vaccinate our young people, according to Dr. James Conway, pediatric infectious disease physician, and medical director, immunization program, UW Health.

“This is what vaccines do, they keep people out of the hospital,” he said.

In fact, vaccination of people ages 17 and younger in the U.S. and Wisconsin lag behind all other age demographics.

As of Dec. 27, across the U.S., about 14% of children ages 5 to 11 have completed their vaccine series, and roughly 53% of kids ages 12 to 17 have two doses, CDC [data](#) showed. The closest demographic was young adults ages 18 to 24 at about 58%.

Wisconsin is very similar in vaccination rates for kids ages 5 to 11 at about 14%, while around 52% of the children ages 12 to 17 have received both doses, DHS [data](#) revealed.

This could be due to several factors like the time the vaccines have been available for children ages 5 to 11, access to the vaccines, political influences and misinformation, Conway said.

And with children returning to school after the holiday break, it will be important to get your children's vaccine series complete or get them started immediately, he said.

"If your child hasn't been vaccinated, it is so important to keep masking and keep your distance when around others," Conway said. "Any hospitalization, but especially of our children, is one too many."

Conway is available for interviews today, and a recorded interview is also available.