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San Diego & Imperial Counties
INCORPORATED IN CALIFORNIA

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS - CALIFORNIA CHAPTER 3

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



January 7, 2022

We at the American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 3 want to correct misinformation that has been circulating in our local news recently. Each day, we are learning more about Delta, Omicron and newer variants of the COVID-19 virus, at the same time, the evidence behind the harm children are experiencing as a result of COVID is undeniable. While hospitalizations among children remain relatively low, California has reported [44 childhood deaths from COVID](#), and children can develop some pretty severe illnesses as a result of contracting COVID.

Any number of deaths among children is too many.

We have tools to keep our children safe: masks and vaccines. Vaccines offer safe and effective protection, which is available to those 5 years and older. Masks allow our children to participate in school, extracurricular activities, and everyday activities while protecting themselves and others. We see no reason to put children at risk of harm from the negative effects of COVID if we universally and effectively utilize the tools we have at our disposal. The vaccination rate in San Diego among those 5-11 years old has reached [89,757](#) (with at least one dose), and an additional 261,697 vaccinated among those 12-19 years old.

KUSI news recently claimed, "[children still have essentially zero risk to the virus](#)" -- a false statement that we categorically refute. While the risk is lower in younger people, the fact is that there still *IS* risk, and such statements from our local news organizations are irresponsible and reprehensible.

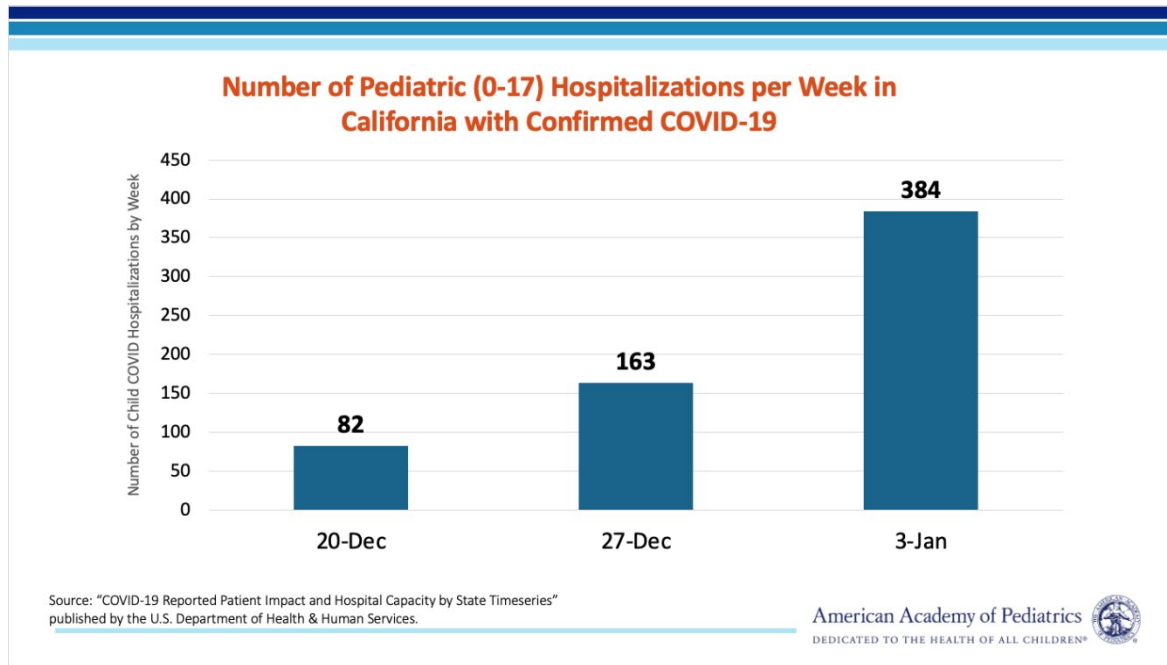
In addition to the risks that come with the virus, some children who have had COVID-19 developed acute COVID symptoms, including the rare but serious condition called Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C). According to the CDC, "MIS-C is a rare but serious condition associated with COVID-19 in which different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs." As of November 30, 2021, the U.S. has reported [5,973](#) MIS-C patients (children) and total of 52 deaths, with California reporting the most cases of any state at 400+ cases. A recent study showed that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is [91% effective against MIS-C](#). Grueling [Long COVID](#) symptoms are still being studied in children and adults that had the virus. [Another new study shows the risk of severe COVID-19 for those with diabetes](#) and may also induce newly diagnosed diabetes. There is also the continued concern of children contracting the virus and then unknowingly spreading it in the community and to vulnerable family members.

COVID-19 cases among U.S. children have reached the highest case count ever reported since the start of the pandemic. According to the CDC, the number of pediatric hospitalizations per week in California increased from 82 to 163 to 384 currently (graphic below). Additionally, a [recent report released by the CDC shows the outcomes of kids hospitalized with COVID-19](#) (slide below). The American Academy of Pediatrics offers [weekly data updates](#) available for reference.

We continue to support our local leaders in encouraging masking and vaccination to protect our children and families from COVID-19. We stand with our pediatricians and healthcare workers who are working tirelessly to keep our children safe.

Sincerely,

The AAP-CA3 Executive
Board and Infectious
Disease Committee



OUTCOMES OF HOSPITALIZED KIDS (<18 YEARS OLD)



[Characteristics and Clinical Outcomes of Children and Adolescents Aged <18 Years Hospitalized with COVID-19 — Six Hospitals, United States, July–August 2021 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm705152a3.htm)

- 915 Covid cases of hospitalized children and teens
- 78% were hospitalized because of complications of COVID-19
- Over half needed help breathing
- 29.5% were placed in intensive care
- **A third had no underlying health problems.**
- Of those with underlying conditions, 32% had obesity and 16% had asthma.
- **0.4% were fully vaccinated** (& 4.4% were partially vaccinated)



Source:
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm705152a3.htm>