

FROM THE HEALTH EXPERTS AT NATIVIDAD MEDICAL CENTER

INSPIRING HEALTHY LIVES

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FALL 2021

Getting Back to School Safely

Dr. Deneen Guss, Monterey County Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Melissa Nothnagle, Natividad Chief of Family Medicine

After being in distance learning mode most of the last school year, we are excited to have students, teachers and staff back together in our school communities. It's something we've all missed deeply, and we understand how vital in-person teaching and learning is for our children and our educators.

We've made much progress in building our defenses against COVID-19, but we are not out of the woods. More than 80% of Monterey County residents 12 and older are vaccinated. As community transmission remains high across the country, we must increase our vaccination rates.

So, we are appealing to all of you who have children or who work in our schools to do everything in your power to ensure we have safe and healthy environments where our children can flourish. The safety and well-being of students, teachers and our staff is a top priority.

First, we strongly recommend COVID-19 vaccinations for everyone who is eligible. While not currently required to attend school, vaccination is our best shot at stopping the devastation of this pandemic and the best way to protect our children from more dangerous variants. **(cont. on page 2)**



TESTING



VACCINES



Natividad has free COVID-19 vaccination clinics every Wednesday from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Hover your smartphone camera over the QR codes or visit montereycountycovid19.com to make an appointment or to find other vaccination and testing sites near you.

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Inspiring healthy lives

Getting Back to School Safely (cont. from page 1)

Second, following recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has mandated that all students, teachers and staff in California public schools wear masks during all indoor activities regardless of vaccination status. Masking is optional for outdoor activities.

Third, California now requires all teachers to get vaccinated or undergo weekly testing. Schools must be in full compliance by October 15.

We all have an important role to play in getting our children back to the learning environment they want, need and deserve — and keeping our schools open. Check mcvaccinate.com or myturn.ca.gov to find a walk-in clinic near you or to make an appointment.



THANK YOU!

We appreciate the hundreds of thousands of people in Monterey County who have already gotten vaccinated. You are inspiring and helping us all live healthier lives!

Want to know how many people in your area are vaccinated?

Hover your smartphone camera here to find out:



COVID-19 Vaccinations for Kids

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Natividad recommend vaccination for everyone eligible to help protect against COVID-19. The FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for kids 12 to 15 in May. According to top U.S. health officials, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine could be authorized for children aged 5 to 11 years old in the fall, and children 6 months to 4 years in the coming months.

Why does my child need a COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines help protect kids from getting COVID-19, including the more contagious Delta variant. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine will also help keep them from getting seriously ill, even if they get COVID-19.

When should my child be vaccinated?

Children should get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they're eligible.

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe for my child?

Yes. The vaccines are safe and effective — they've been tested and used under the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. The vaccines work by teaching your body to fight the virus, which prevents you from getting sick and reduces the severity of the illness if you are infected. They don't contain the COVID-19 virus and won't make you sick, though kids and adults may have some side effects up to a few days after vaccination.

OUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE: We encourage you to talk with your family doctor or pediatrician if you have any questions about the vaccine.

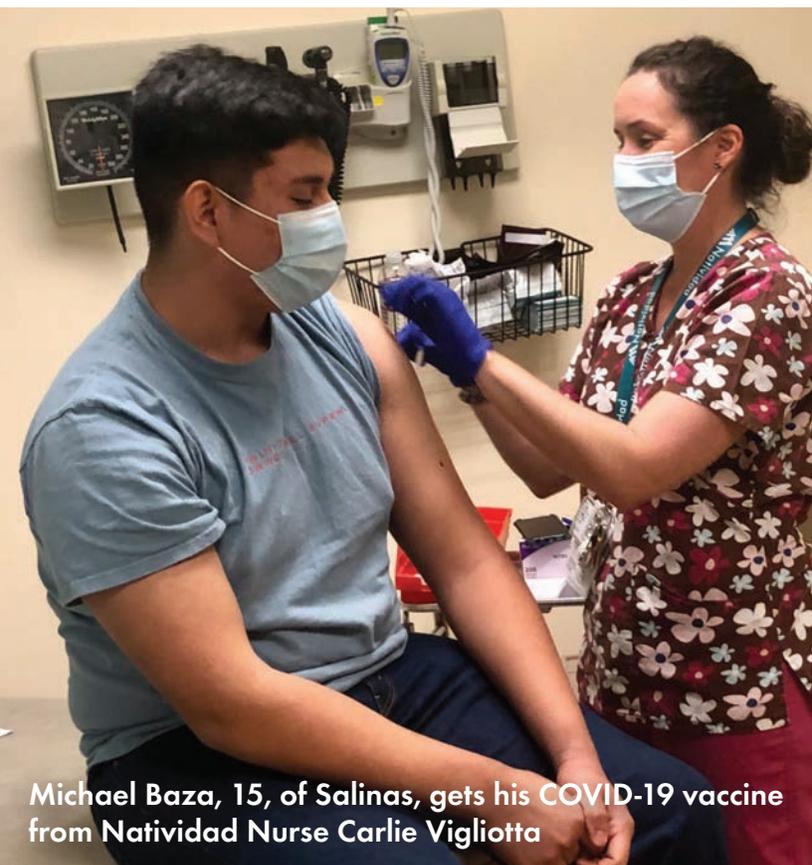
Trick or Treat?

Fun & Safer Fall Festivities

You and your family can have lots of fun this fall if you take the right precautions to avoid COVID-19 and the flu. Choose activities that you and your family can do outdoors where physical distancing is possible. Keep activities small and with other families where the parents and kids are vaccinated, if they're eligible. Trick-or-treating, fall festivals, pumpkin patches, hayrides (with masks on) and corn mazes are all considered lower risk activities.

- If you need to go inside, wear a mask if unvaccinated or in a public area
- If you touch objects or people, wash or sanitize your hands (we suggest packing a bag with hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes)
- When possible, stay 6 feet away from people who don't live with you
- Steer clear of potlucks, buffets and sharing snacks that are touched by others (like a bowl of chips)

OUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE: If an event isn't how you imagined it would be, or you don't feel as safe as you thought you would, it's okay to leave and plan a different way to celebrate. It's always better to be safe and trust your instincts.



Michael Baza, 15, of Salinas, gets his COVID-19 vaccine from Natividad Nurse Carlie Vigliotta

COVID-19 VACCINES and the FLU SHOT

Did you know you can get a COVID-19 vaccine and the flu shot at the same visit? Kids can, too! Flu shots are available for free at some clinics or no cost with insurance from many providers. Talk with your health care provider to learn more. If you or your child is sick with COVID-19, it's best to recover before getting the flu shot.

COVID-19 VACCINATION, PREGNANCY AND FERTILITY: IT'S SAFE

COVID-19 vaccinations are recommended for everyone who is eligible. This includes people who are trying to get pregnant now or might become pregnant in the future, as well as their partners. Currently, no evidence shows that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems (problems trying to get pregnant) in women or men. Pregnant and recently pregnant people are also more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people.



OUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE: If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, get vaccinated. If you get pregnant after receiving your first shot of a COVID-19 vaccine that requires two doses (i.e., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), you should get your second shot on schedule to get as much protection as possible.



“ I got the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it was made available to health care workers. I was 28 weeks pregnant at the time. I did it for myself, my unborn baby and my family. My son is now 5 months old and is happy, healthy and thriving! I am so grateful to have been able to get the vaccine when I did and to have been protected during my pregnancy.”

– Aleyna Hamlin, MSN, FNP
Natividad Pediatric Supervising Nurse

The COVID-19 Delta Variant

Studies show the Delta variant is very contagious – more than polio, SARS or MERS. Even if you're vaccinated, there's a slight chance you could become a carrier for the disease or even get mildly sick.

OUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE: With the Delta variant spreading in our community, we must take extra precautions, like masking indoors in public. This will keep hospitalizations low and more people healthy.



Helping Kids Cope with COVID-19 Anxiety

Dr. Christopher Carpenter,
Director of Pediatric Services

Even though our kids may be eager to get back to all the activities they participated in pre-pandemic, it's essential to acknowledge any concerns or anxieties they may have. If your kids are concerned or anxious, there are ways to help them get through their worries and get more comfortable.

Encourage your kids to talk about their feelings

Even if they don't seem anxious to you, check-in with them. Give them the space and security to talk about what they're feeling. Just like Mr. Rogers said, "When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting,

and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know we're not alone."

Identify ways to cope

Once the feeling is identified and not as scary, help your child figure out what might help them work through the emotion. Reading a favorite book, writing in a journal, drawing or other art projects or listening to music are all activities that might help.

Plan fun activities

Physical activity is a great way to help regulate the hormones associated with anxiety. (Check out "7 Family-Friendly Local Hikes" on page 6). Turn off the news and focus time on enjoyable activities

like making art or music or playing games.

Be encouraging but realistic

It's best to keep things straightforward. Acknowledge that what they feel is normal in this situation rather than minimizing or promising that everything will be better tomorrow.

When necessary, seek professional help

If your child's behaviors interfere with daily life, talk to your family doctor or pediatrician for their advice. They may be able to help or suggest a referral to a therapist. Your child's school may also have mental health resources available.

Breakthrough Infections

When someone gets COVID-19 after being vaccinated, that's called a breakthrough infection. The COVID-19 vaccines are incredibly effective at preventing infection in yourself, preventing you from spreading the virus to others and preventing outbreaks. While no vaccine can prevent 100% of all infections, the COVID-19 vaccine does a fantastic job at drastically lowering your risk of getting sick. If you were to get a breakthrough infection after getting vaccinated, you are far less likely to experience complications or require hospitalization, which is exactly what the vaccine is designed to do. Most importantly, the vaccine nearly eliminates your risk of death from COVID-19.



OUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE: If you've had close contact (6 feet or less for 15 minutes or longer in a 24-hour period) with someone with COVID-19, the CDC now recommends that even if you don't have symptoms, all people – vaccinated and unvaccinated – should get tested three to five days after exposure. Also wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until a negative test result. Vaccinated people do not need to quarantine unless they are experiencing symptoms.



7 FAMILY-FRIENDLY LOCAL HIKES

We live in one of the most naturally beautiful places in the country, and our mild year-round climate makes exercising outside easy and enjoyable. Monterey County offers many free or low-cost hikes and walks that are perfect for the whole family.

In addition to the physical health benefits of getting your body moving, being in nature has beneficial effects on emotional and psychological health. Plus, if you want to spend time with people who don't live with you, the great outdoors is the safer choice! You are less likely to be exposed to COVID-19 during outdoor activities, even without the use of masks.

Take plenty of water for each person in your group and your pet, if bringing one. Be sure to check the icons to see if dogs are allowed. Most trails are free unless noted.

OUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE: Children should get at least 60 minutes of exercise a day, and adults benefit from getting at least 150 minutes of exercise per week. If you've been a couch potato this last year, you can start slow, but be sure to consult your doctor before starting an exercise program if you have a medical history of heart or lung disease.

Monterey Peninsula

Monterey Bay Recreation Trail is a paved walking and biking trail that runs 18 miles. It's mostly flat along the shoreline from Lover's Point to Monterey. Then and it gets a little more hilly as you go from Sand City to Marina to Castroville. It's easy to do as much or as little as you like on this trail, which can be accessed from many public parking lots along the route.



Asilomar State Beach & Coastal Trail runs 3.6 flat miles along the Pacific Grove coast from Point Pinos to Asilomar State Beach. Be sure to walk down to one of the many beaches – just be aware that ocean waves can sneak up on you and be dangerous. The trail is accessible from many parking spots anywhere along Ocean View Boulevard. If you use a wheelchair, scan the QR code for more info about parking and beach wheelchairs available for loan.



Frog Pond Wetland Trail is a 0.7-mile flat loop trail in Del Rey Oaks. The trail can be accessed from Canyon Del Rey, across from Del Rey Park.



Stroller friendly



Dogs allowed on leash



Horses allowed on trail



Beach views



Forest views



Wildlife



Wildflowers



Restroom facilities



Wheelchair accessible

Carmel Valley

Lupine Loop Trail is a 1.5-mile flat loop trail located in Garland Regional Park in Carmel Valley. Tons of other trails are available and most are family-friendly. Plenty of parking at the park entrance on Carmel Valley Road.



Salinas

Trail 1/72/31 Loop is a 2.7-mile loop trail with a gradual elevation gain of 383 feet located in the Fort Ord National Monument. The trail is accessible from the Creekside Terrace parking lot near Highway 68 at the east end of the park.



North County

The **Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve** has five miles of trails that meander through beautiful oak woodlands, wetlands and meadows. The Reserve is open Wednesday through Sunday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Visit elkhornslough.org for wheelchair and stroller accessibility info.



South County

Pinnacles National Park has over 30 miles of trails and range from easy enough for small children to quite strenuous. For families, we like the Moses Spring to Rim Trail Loop, a 2.2-mile round trip trail, with an elevation gain of 500 feet. Bear Gulch Cave is open seasonally. Flashlight required in the cave. Parking is \$30/car, annual passes are \$55.



Vaccinating Our Kids

“

My daughter, 17-year-old Gabby, feels safe, protected and a lot more comfortable now that she's vaccinated. She's able to participate in the sports and activities she loves. If she's exposed to someone with COVID-19, she doesn't need to quarantine unless she gets symptoms. I urge all my friends with kids who are over the age of 12 to get them vaccinated so we can all go back to living life as normally as possible.”

– **Andrea Rosenberg**
Natividad Assistant Administrator





Questions about the vaccine?
Talk with your doctor to get answers.

Do You Need to Get Vaccinated if You've Had COVID-19?

Yes! COVID-19 vaccines provide added protection to your immune system and help protect you from serious illness if you do get sick again. However, there are a few instances when you'll want to wait 90 days after recovering from COVID-19 before getting vaccinated. Talk with your doctor for more information or visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

When to Mask Up?

Most people don't need to wear a mask outdoors, but some people may want to, especially if they are immunocompromised or otherwise at high risk of getting sick. Kids or anyone unvaccinated should mask up if indoors or close to others. Vaccinated or not, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission.

The Latest on Booster Shots

In August, the FDA authorized extra doses of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for a select group of severely immunocompromised people. In addition, the CDC recommends Pfizer-BioNTech boosters six months after their second dose for:

- Older adults age 65+ and those living in long-term care facilities
- Adults ages 50-64 at high risk of severe COVID-19, due to underlying medical conditions
- Adults ages 18-49 at high risk of severe COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions should consider a booster based on an assessment of their individual benefits and risks and consultation with their medical provider
- Adults age 18-64 for people whose jobs put them at high risk for COVID-19

At the time of publication, experts were looking at all available data for Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson had not yet applied. COVID-19 vaccine booster shots for the general public may be decided at a later time. Please visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for the latest news.

Do You Have a COVID-19 Plan?

It's important to stay home from work, school and any other gatherings if you have any symptoms of COVID-19. Be prepared by having a childcare plan in case you or your child gets sick or must quarantine after exposure to someone with COVID-19.

If you have any of the following symptoms, you may have COVID-19 and should stay home and get tested.

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea



SYMPTOMS



Feeling Sick?

Check Your Symptoms
with the CDC Self-Checker