



Public Health
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Officially Ends May 11

Many to see changes in COVID-19 healthcare costs, insurance coverage, and benefits.

CHAMPAIGN, IL – On May 11, 2023, the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) will officially end, marking a significant milestone in the fight against the pandemic. The declaration of the PHE was initially made on January 31, 2020 to mobilize and coordinate a nationwide response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The state of Illinois followed on March 9, 2020. Since then, Illinois residents could collect additional SNAP benefits, more than 1.4 million children received pandemic EBT (nutrition) support, and Medicaid benefits expanded so residents could access telehealth and additional resources¹.

Before the PHE ends, people are encouraged to order free COVID-19 tests from the government (four tests per residential address) and get up to date on vaccinations. Individuals can check if they are up to date by visiting <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html> and can find where to receive vaccines by visiting [vaccines.gov](https://www.c-uphd.org/covid-vaccinations.html) for pharmacy locations or by visiting <https://www.c-uphd.org/covid-vaccinations.html>. Individuals with healthcare facilities should call their provider's office for more information or to set up an appointment. Free at-home COVID tests can be ordered at <https://special.usps.com/testkits> or by calling 1-800-232-0233.

Beginning May 11, coverage for COVID-19 testing will change. The requirement for private insurance companies to cover COVID-19 tests without cost sharing, both over-the-counter (OTC) and laboratory tests, will end and individuals should reach out to their insurance provider for details. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Increasing Community Access to Testing (ICATT) program will continue no-cost testing for uninsured persons, though there may be a reduction in testing locations after the PHE ends. Individuals can find a no-cost testing location by visiting

¹ "Gov. Pritzker Announces End of State COVID-19 Disaster Proclamation." *Illinois.gov*, January 31, 2023. State of Illinois. <https://www.illinois.gov/news/press-release.25998>.

<https://testinglocator.cdc.gov/Search>.

From OSF spokesperson Tim Ditman, “The end of the Public Health Emergency declaration means that most waivers enacted during the pandemic which allowed flexibilities in providing and billing for services also end. The main exception is telehealth services for Medicare enrollees. Those waivers have been extended until the end of calendar year 2024, so services and billing for telehealth services for Medicare enrollees will not change. We will be making necessary adjustments in other areas. Find more information at osfhealthcare.org.”

[SHIELD Illinois](#) testing at the University of Illinois’ Campus Recreation Center East (CRCE) will close on May 26, with the option to relocate to another location until June 30. Additional information will be provided if announced.

Additionally, the CDC has stated there will be reduced reporting of negative laboratory tests for SARS-CoV-2. The change will impact the percent positivity metric used for transmission level reporting. Transmission levels have been used in healthcare settings to determine prevention measures and mitigation strategies. Champaign-Urbana Public Health will continue to report transmission levels for as long as the data is available. The CDC is currently determining how to address healthcare guidance without the use of transmission levels.

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District would like to remind residents of steps they can take after the PHE ends to protect themselves and the community:

- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. The FDA has recently authorized the bivalent booster for all doses starting at six months of age, as well as a second bivalent booster for individuals aged 65 and older who have had their primary vaccination series and are at least four months out from a previous bivalent booster shot.
 - Immunocompromised individuals may receive a single additional dose of a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine at least two months following a dose of a bivalent vaccine. Additional doses may be administered at the discretion of, and at intervals determined by, their healthcare provider. Those who might qualify should reach out to their medical provider for further discussion.
 - The monovalent Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines are no longer authorized for use in the United States.
 - Alternatives to mRNA vaccines (Novavax or Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen) remain available for individuals who cannot or will not receive an mRNA vaccine.²
- If a person tests positive for COVID-19 after May 11, they should not delay treatment.
- Staying home when sick, frequent hand washing, mask-wearing, and social distancing are still the most effective ways to keep COVID-19 transmission low.

Administrator Julie Pryde says, “The public health emergency declaration is ending, but COVID is still out there making people sick and taking lives. Please stay current on vaccinations. If you develop symptoms of COVID, local healthcare providers can test for COVID, influenza, and RSV at the same visit.

² “CDC Simplifies COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations, Allows Older Adults and Immunocompromised Adults to Get Second Dose of the Updated Vaccine.” *CDC Newsroom*, April 19, 2023. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2023/s0419-covid-vaccines.html>.

Determining which virus you have can help get treatment early when it is most effective.”

More information regarding the end of the COVID-19 PHE can be found at:

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/02/09/fact-sheet-covid-19-public-health-emergency-transition-roadmap.html>