



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Current State of COVID-19 and Pediatric Vaccine Update - Watauga County

[Boone, NC] - As COVID-19 continues to circulate and even increase over the past few weeks in key statewide metrics like hospitalizations, COVID-19 like illness in the Emergency Departments and COVID-19 particles found in wastewater, it remains important to take actions to protect yourself, loved ones and the community from severe outcomes due to COVID-19.

Watauga County is currently at a medium [COVID-19 Community Level](#) as defined by the CDC. This level measures the impact of COVID-19 on health and healthcare systems. A medium level means you may need to take more precautions to prevent illness and protect yourself and others from severe outcomes like hospitalization and death.

With increased COVID-19 circulating, what can you do to protect yourself, loved ones and the community?

- **Stay up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccines, including boosters.** More Information on COVID-19 vaccines can be found on [AppHealthCare's website](#).
- **Get tested if you have symptoms.** Don't visit the Emergency Department for just testing.
- **Stay home if you're sick - except to get medical care.** This helps limit potential exposure to others.
- **If you test positive, seek treatment options as soon as you can to lower your chance of hospitalization and severe outcomes.** As soon as you feel sick, it's time to get tested and treated. That's because treatments work best if you start them soon after you notice symptoms of COVID-19. Remember, your first symptoms may be a cough, headache, or sore throat—and they may even be mild. The key is: *don't wait*. Locate Test to Treat options near you by visiting the [NC DHHS website](#).
- **Wear a mask if you test positive for COVID-19 or have COVID-19 like symptoms.** People may choose to wear a mask at any time.

Pediatric Vaccine Update for Children 6 months to 4 years

A Committee of the FDA will review and discuss data from Moderna and Pfizer on June 15th for vaccines for younger children 6 months to 4 years old. The CDC Advisory Committee for Immunization Practice (ACIP) will meet June 17th and 18th to discuss any recommendations made by the FDA. Both the FDA and CDC have to make recommendations for the vaccine's use before any vaccines can be administered.

In preparation for recommendations, AppHealthCare is planning to extend clinic hours until 6:00pm for vaccine administration for this age group at their Watauga location (126 Poplar Grove Connector in Boone) on June 23rd and June 30th. Appointments can be made by calling (828) 795-1970. Appointment scheduling is available in Spanish by calling (828) 795-1970 and pressing 1. La programación de citas está disponible en español llamando al (828) 795-1970 y oprimiendo número 1.

Blue Ridge Pediatrics will also be able to administer the vaccine for this age group. An email will go out to their patients with more details once it is approved by the CDC. They are planning to extend COVID vaccine clinic hours on June 21st until 7:30pm and from 9am to 4pm on June 24th. This will be available to existing patients and by appointment only in the Boone office. Appointments will be available starting on Monday morning, June 20th, as long as the CDC has finalized their recommendation and can be made by calling (828) 262-0100.

“We encourage parents and caregivers to ask questions about the vaccines and seek information from reputable sources like the CDC, NC DHHS or their child’s pediatrician or healthcare provider to make the most informed decision for their child’s health,” stated Jennifer Greene, Health Director, AppHealthCare.

“Parents have been waiting since the start of the pandemic for the chance to protect their youngest children against COVID. That time is almost here. Once the CDC offers their formal recommendation, we will continue to work hard to make these vaccines available to our patients,” stated Dr. Scott St. Clair, Blue Ridge Pediatrics.

If you have questions about COVID-19 vaccines, visit www.apphealthcare.com/covid-19-vaccinations or contact your healthcare provider or call our COVID-19 Call Center at (828) 795-1970.

For additional information about AppHealthCare or other community resources and health related data, please call our offices, Alleghany (336) 372-5641, Ashe (336) 246-9449, Watauga (828) 264-4995 or visit our website at www.apphealthcare.com and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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