



Camp Ramah Darom - 2022 COVID-19 Vaccine and Booster Policy

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is Ramah Darom's vaccination policy new?

Ramah Darom has a long-standing camp vaccination policy that has always required all campers and staff to adhere to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices (ACIP) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) or the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) as outlined in [US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's \(CDC\) Recommended Immunization Schedules](#). CDC recommendations specific to the COVID-19 vaccine can be found [here](#).

Every camp in the Ramah Camping Movement has a similar policy and now requires the COVID vaccine and booster as recommended by the CDC, and the other Atlanta-based Jewish overnight camps now also require the COVID vaccine and booster as recommended.

I understand that all eligible campers this summer must be vaccinated against COVID-19. Can you clarify which campers are also required to get the booster?

The CDC now recommends that everyone 12+ receive a booster shot five months after their primary series of COVID-19 vaccines.

If your child is attending Session Aleph and completed their primary vaccination series before January 1, 2022, or if your child is attending Session Bet and completed their primary vaccination series before February 1, 2022, Ramah Darom is requiring they get the booster before coming to Camp. "Completed primary vaccination series" means the date they had their second Pfizer or Moderna shot, or their single J&J shot.

When you announced your COVID-19 vaccination policy last fall, did you say boosters were required?

We announced our updated Ramah Darom COVID-19 Vaccination Policy on November 18, 2021. The policy includes the following language: "All Ramah Darom campers, attendees, staff and visitors eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19 are required to complete full vaccination at least two weeks prior to the start of the program they are attending. This includes the Covid booster where indicated."

On January 5, 2022, the CDC added the COVID booster recommendations for those 12-17. In the January announcement, CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky (herself a long-time Jewish summer camp doctor) said: "We now recommend that all adolescents aged 12-17 years should receive a booster shot 5 months after their primary series. This booster dose will provide optimized protection against COVID-19 and the Omicron variant."

Ramah Darom's Medical Committee regularly reviews the most current guidance and updates our policies as appropriate. At its March meeting, the Committee reviewed this updated CDC guidance and confirmed that we will be following their booster recommendations for campers 12+ this summer.

Wouldn't it be ok if some campers 12+ are boosted and some are not?

In addition to the public health benefits, from a practical perspective having bunks with some boosted and some unboosted campers will be very challenging should there be a COVID exposure during Camp.

Based on CDC [Quarantine and Isolation guidelines](#), in the event of an exposure those who are boosted would still be able to continue being involved in all Camp activities. But anyone NOT boosted would be required to quarantine for at least 5 days. Ramah Darom simply does not have enough staff to operate two separate programs for each bunk. Therefore, if some campers in an exposed bunk are boosted and others are not, the likely outcome would be that even boosted campers would be forced to quarantine. The other option would be to send home any unboosted campers. Our hope is to avoid either scenario.

My child has had two vaccine doses and recently had COVID-19 – are they not naturally protected?

Here's how the CDC answers this common question: "COVID-19 vaccination causes a more predictable immune response than infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine gives most people a high level of protection against COVID-19 and can provide [added protection for people who already had COVID-19](#). [One study](#) showed that, for people who already had COVID-19, those who do not get vaccinated after their recovery are more than 2 times as likely to get COVID-19 again than those who get fully vaccinated after their recovery."

How soon after recovering from COVID-19 can my child get the booster?

According to the CDC, "People with COVID-19 who have symptoms should wait to be vaccinated until they have recovered from their illness and have met the [criteria](#) for discontinuing isolation; those without symptoms should also wait until they [meet the criteria](#) before getting vaccinated."

Will my child require a second booster before the summer?

No. Current CDC recommendations for a second booster shot are only for immunocompromised individuals and people over the age of 50.

Do boosters work? I know many people who had the booster and still got COVID-19.

The medical evidence is clear: COVID 19-vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19, and the booster helps broaden and strengthen protection against Omicron and other variants.

Two new studies reinforce the effectiveness of vaccines and boosters across three variants of concern (Alpha, Delta, and Omicron). The CDC just released a [study](#) showing that, among adults hospitalized with COVID-19 during the Delta and Omicron waves, protection was highest in those who received a third COVID-19 vaccine dose. A new study published in the [British Medical Journal](#) found that vaccines were found to be highly effective in preventing hospital admissions related to the Alpha, Delta, and Omicron variants, but three vaccine doses were required to achieve protection against Omicron similar to the protection that two doses provided against the Delta and Alpha variants.

The CDC has created [this helpful list](#) of myths and facts about the COVID vaccine and booster.

What if my child requires a medical exemption?

All requests for exemptions will be reviewed by our Medical Chair, in consultation with the Medical Committee. You can email your request to camp@ramahdarom.org. Exceptions to the Ramah

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Darom vaccination policy are extremely rare; you can find more details about the policy and exemption criteria [here](#).

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