COVID-19, COVID-19 Vaccines & You

3 Things You Should Know

1. Some people are more likely to **become seriously ill and need hospital care** if they get COVID-19. This includes people who are age 65 years and older, live in a long-term care facility, or have certain health conditions (e.g., heart or lung problems, diabetes, cancer).
2. **Unvaccinated adults had a 10.5 times higher rate of COVID-19 hospitalization** than fully vaccinated adults.[1]
3. Getting COVID-19 **vaccine is important, especially for people** working with vulnerable residents.

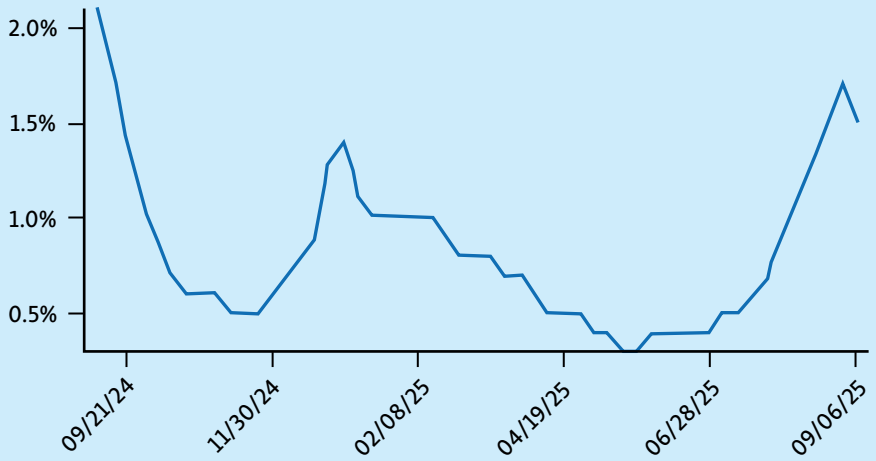
Basic COVID-19 Facts

- **COVID-19 infections are still happening.** The number of people seeking emergency department care for COVID-19 increases in the late summer, fall and winter months.
- People with a COVID-19 infection can spread the virus by sneezing, coughing, and talking 1–2 days before they show symptoms and up to 8–10 days after symptoms resolve.[2]
- Some people experience mild or no symptoms, but the virus can cause severe illness, hospitalization, or death – especially in people with medical conditions.

% ED visits diagnosed as COVID-19

1.5%

Week ending 2025-09-06
Previous Week 1.7%



Reference for Figure:
Surveillance and Data Analytics | COVID-19 | CDC, www.cdc.gov/covid/php/surveillance/index.html

Why Should I Get Vaccinated?

People working in long-term care should consider getting vaccinated to protect themselves, their loved ones, and residents. Immunity from both COVID-19 disease and vaccination wane over time. Immunity from being infected with COVID-19 is **NOT** stronger or longer lasting than from being vaccinated.[3]

Immunity from vaccination is achieved **without exposing others to the risks of COVID-19 and long COVID.** Vaccination helps protect you from **serious COVID-19 disease (needing an Emergency Department visit or hospital stay)**. Compared to vaccinated people, unvaccinated people are 3 times more likely to develop severe illness.[4]

References

[1] COVID-19-Associated Hospitalizations Among Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Adults 18 Years or Older in 13 US States, January 2021 to April 2022, https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2796235

[2] CDC Yellow Book: Health Information for International Travel, www.cdc.gov/yellow-book/hcp/travel-associated-infections-diseases/covid-19.html

[3] Natural and vaccine-induced immunity are equivalent for the protection against SARS-CoV-2 infection - PMC, pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10198735/

[4] CDC: Unvaccinated adults 3-5 times more likely to get omicron infection | AHA News, www.aha.org/news/headline/2022-01-21-cdc-unvaccinated-adults-3-5-times-more-likely-get-omicron-infection#:~:text=According%20to%20data%20from%2025,persons%20aged%2050%20and%20older.

Why Should I Get Vaccinated? (*continued*)

Vaccination helps reduce the chances of developing long COVID-19 by 27% to 70%.[1] Severe COVID-19 is associated with an increased risk of long COVID-19. Because vaccination decreases the risk of severe disease, it also decreases the risk of long COVID-19. So, vaccination protects you in the short term and lowers the risk of long-term complications.

Should I Get a COVID-19 Vaccine as Recommended?

The Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medical Association (PALTmed) recommends **routine vaccination of residents and staff without contraindications as described below:**

- All residents ≥ 18 years: Should receive one dose of the 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine.
- Residents with moderate to severe immunocompromise and those 65 and older: Should receive at least two doses of the 2025–2026 COVID-19 vaccine.
- All staff: Clinical staff and nonclinical staff including vendors, contractors, and trainees in PALTC facilities should receive one dose of the 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine.
- Staff with moderate to severe immunocompromise may need additional doses.

Why Get Vaccinated If I Might Have Side Effects?

Most people don't have side effects that keep them from going to work or school. People who DO have vaccine side effects (e.g., redness, swelling, and pain at the injection site, tiredness, chills) can usually manage them with over-the-counter medicines such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. These side effects go away after a day or so. You are not spreading COVID-19 during this time.

To reduce pain or discomfort:

- If the arm is sore, apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area and keep moving the arm.
- Take over the counter (OTC) medicine, such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or aspirin (only for people ages 18 years or older).
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- If possible, get some rest.

Got COVID-19	Got Vaccine Side Effects
May need ED or hospital	May need acetaminophen or ibuprofen
May need to be out for 5 days or more	May miss a day of work (unusual)
Spreading virus to LTCF residents, co-workers, loved ones	Not spreading the virus to anyone

Getting vaccinated helps prevent COVID-19 infection, which would make you miss work.

References

[1]COVID Vaccines Reduce Long COVID Risk, New Study Shows > News > Yale Medicine, www.yalemedicine.org/news/covid-vaccines-reduce-long-covid-risk-new-study-shows

DNA Cannot Be Changed by mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines DO NOT affect your DNA. They instruct cells to make proteins found on the virus surface. Those proteins prompt antibody production to fight infection. Once proteins are made, cells break down and discard the instructions.

For those concerned about mRNA, a protein-based COVID-19 vaccine (Novavax) is available.

Do Other Vaccines Give Me Some Protection From COVID-19 Infection?

Other vaccines, such as flu or pneumococcal vaccine, will not protect you from a COVID-19 infection. Vaccines are made to protect against a specific germ or virus.

When you choose vaccination, you protect yourself, your loved ones, and your residents. You have the choice to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Learn More

- **COVID-19, CDC,** www.cdc.gov/covid/
- **Ask the Experts: COVID-19**, www.immunize.org/ask-experts/topic/covid-19/
- **COMIRNATY, FDA**, www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/comirnaty
- **MNEXSPIKE, FDA,** www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/mnexspike
- **NUVAXOVID, FDA,** www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines/nuvaxovid
- **SPIKEVAX, FDA,** www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/spikevax