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What You Need to Know: COVID-19 Vaccines for Older Adults (65+)

The best protection against COVID-19 is to get vaccinated.

- Adults 65 and older who have no immune problems should receive 2 doses of the 2026-2027 COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer Cominarty, Moderna Spikevax, Moderna mNEXSPIKE, or Sanofi Nuvaxovid to protect against serious illness due to COVID-19
- You should get the vaccines 6 months apart (minimum interval 2 months).

For people who are immunocompromised, age and vaccine history determine which COVID-19 vaccine to get and the number of doses needed.*

Getting a COVID-19 vaccination will protect you and others against the virus

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. Some people who get COVID-19 might only feel a little sick, but others can get very sick or even die. This is especially true for older adults or people with chronic health conditions. One in 100 older Americans have died from COVID-19 disease. 75% of all COVID-19 deaths in the United States have been among adults 65 years or older.

The FDA and professional medical societies recommend receiving the 2026-2027 COVID-19 vaccine. Getting the vaccine has many benefits:

- It lowers the chance of getting sick if you are exposed to the virus. Even if you have received the vaccine, it is still possible to get COVID-19. However, real-world data shows that the COVID-19 vaccines greatly reduces your chances of becoming seriously ill if you do get infected.
- It reduces the chance of being hospitalized with COVID-19.
- The vaccine also helps protect others, especially people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19, like older adults and those with chronic conditions.

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* See page 2 for COVID vaccine recommendations for people with weak immune systems.

People who have weakened immune systems or take medicines that affect their immune system are at higher risk of getting very sick or dying from COVID-19. It is very important for these people to get the COVID-19 vaccine. It is also important to know that you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. Vaccines do not cause infection from viruses, and they don't change our DNA or genes.

***CDC COVID-19 2024-2025 Vaccine Recommendations for Older Adults (65+) Who have problems with their immune system (immunocompromised)**

There are different vaccine recommendations for older adults who have a weakened immune system. A person is considered immunocompromised when their immune system is not working as well as it should.

People with a weak immune system may have a harder time fighting off COVID-19 and are at a higher risk of getting very sick or even dying from it.

- You might have a weak immune system if you have conditions like cancer, diabetes, or heart disease. These are just a few examples of health problems that can weaken your immune system.

You should talk to your health care professional to find out if you have a condition that weakens your immune system.

Differences Between the Vaccines

- ▶ The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are mRNA vaccines. The mRNA in the vaccine teaches our cells how to trigger the immune response against the COVID-19 virus. That way, if you encounter the COVID-19 virus after receiving the vaccine, your body will recognize the virus and fight it off. mRNA vaccines have been safely used for decades.
- ▶ Sanofi is a protein subunit vaccine. This means that it contains proteins of the virus that causes COVID-19. From this vaccine, your immune system learns how to respond to the protein in the vaccine so it can respond to the actual virus and protect you against COVID-19.

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Vaccine Safety

Safety has been key in developing and approving COVID-19 vaccines. There were many steps taken to make sure the COVID-19 vaccines are safe.

- **First**, clinical trials were carefully designed and controlled to find out how safe and effective the vaccines are. Tens of thousands of people participated in the clinical trials.
- **After** the clinical trials proved the vaccines were safe and effective, then the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reviewed the safety data to make sure they were correct. Once these vaccines were found to meet the high standards of safety and effectiveness, the FDA authorized the vaccine for use in the US.
- **Then**, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) at the CDC reviewed all available data about the vaccine before determining whether to recommend it and who should receive it. These vaccine recommendations went then go through an approval process by both ACIP and CDC.
- **Finally**, the FDA and CDC continue to track outcomes from COVID-19 vaccines to ensure they are safe.

The CDC and other partners assess the effectiveness and safety of the COVID-19 vaccines under real-world conditions after FDA approval.

A comprehensive evidence review for the 2026-2027 respiratory virus season found no new safety concerns for COVID-19 vaccines consistent with the well established safety profile of COVID-19 vaccines in older adults.

Talk to your Primary Care Clinician or Vaccine Provider

We recommend that you discuss the risks and benefits of getting vaccinated with your primary care clinician or vaccine provider before getting the shots.

Tell your vaccination provider about all your medical conditions, including if you:

- Have any allergies
- Have a fever
- Have a bleeding disorder or take blood-thinning drugs
- Are immunocompromised or take medicine that affects your immune system
- Have received another COVID-19 vaccine

They will discuss any other factors you need to know before receiving a COVID-19 vaccine based on your unique circumstances.

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DID YOU KNOW?

FDA-approved vaccines are currently available at no cost to you:

- If you have Medicare, you will not have to pay to get vaccinated.
- Medicaid and private health insurance plans cover all vaccine costs.
- If you are uninsured you can get free vaccines.

Vaccines are available at many locations:

- Most drug stores
- Community health centers
- State or local health departments

Find a COVID-19 vaccine location near you:

- Ask your doctor or healthcare professional
- Call 1-800-232-0233 and follow the menu prompts