

# COVID-19 Vaccine & Older Adults: What You Need to Know

## Older adults are at highest risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19

Older age remains the strongest risk factor for severe COVID-19 outcomes. Throughout the pandemic and subsequent respiratory seasons, older adults have experienced the highest hospitalization rates of any age group. During the Delta and Omicron periods, the proportion of adults 65 years of age and older who were hospitalized increased compared to previous periods in the pandemic. [Data suggests](#) that a majority of COVID-19 hospitalizations between October 2024 and September 2025 were among this group. Additionally, most adults hospitalized for COVID-19 had received [no COVID-19 vaccines](#) since July 2023.

## Only 3 in 10 older adults in North Dakota received COVID-19 vaccination during the 2024-2025 respiratory season

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older have a conversation with a trusted health care provider about COVID-19 vaccine. This is especially important for those at high risk of severe COVID-19 including individuals 65 years and older.

Only [29.1%](#) of North Dakotans 65 and older received a dose of the 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine. When looking specifically at [nursing home residents and staff](#) as of March 2025, 58.4% of residents but **less than 10% of nursing home health care staff** were up to date on COVID-19 vaccination in ND.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Schedule

CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older speak to their trusted health care provider about COVID-19 vaccine. This conversation is especially important for those at high risk of developing severe COVID-19 disease, including everyone 6 months and older.

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If you choose to receive a 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine this should be administered at least 2 months after any previous doses. Adults 65 years of age and older may also receive a second 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine six months after the first dose. Individuals who have questions are recommended to contact their health care provider, local health department, or pharmacist.

## Additional doses

The CDC recommends moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals receive anywhere from 1 to 3 doses of updated COVID-19 vaccine. The number of doses recommended depends on the individual's vaccination history and vaccine manufacturer. After this initial series, the CDC allows this group to receive an additional COVID-19 vaccine dose. Any additional doses beyond that may be administered, informed by clinical judgement from a health care provider and personal preference and circumstances. This recommendation applies to [moderately to severely immunocompromised](#) individuals only. Individuals who have questions are recommended to contact their health care provider, local health department, or pharmacist.

## Updated vaccine provides additional protection against COVID-19

The updated COVID-19 vaccine provides protection against more prevalent variants. COVID-19 vaccine can help protect against severe COVID-19 disease outcomes, like hospitalization and death. However, as the virus changes and immunity naturally decreases over time, individuals may lose some of that protection. The best way to protect older adults from COVID-19 is to make sure they are up to date on COVID-19 vaccination.

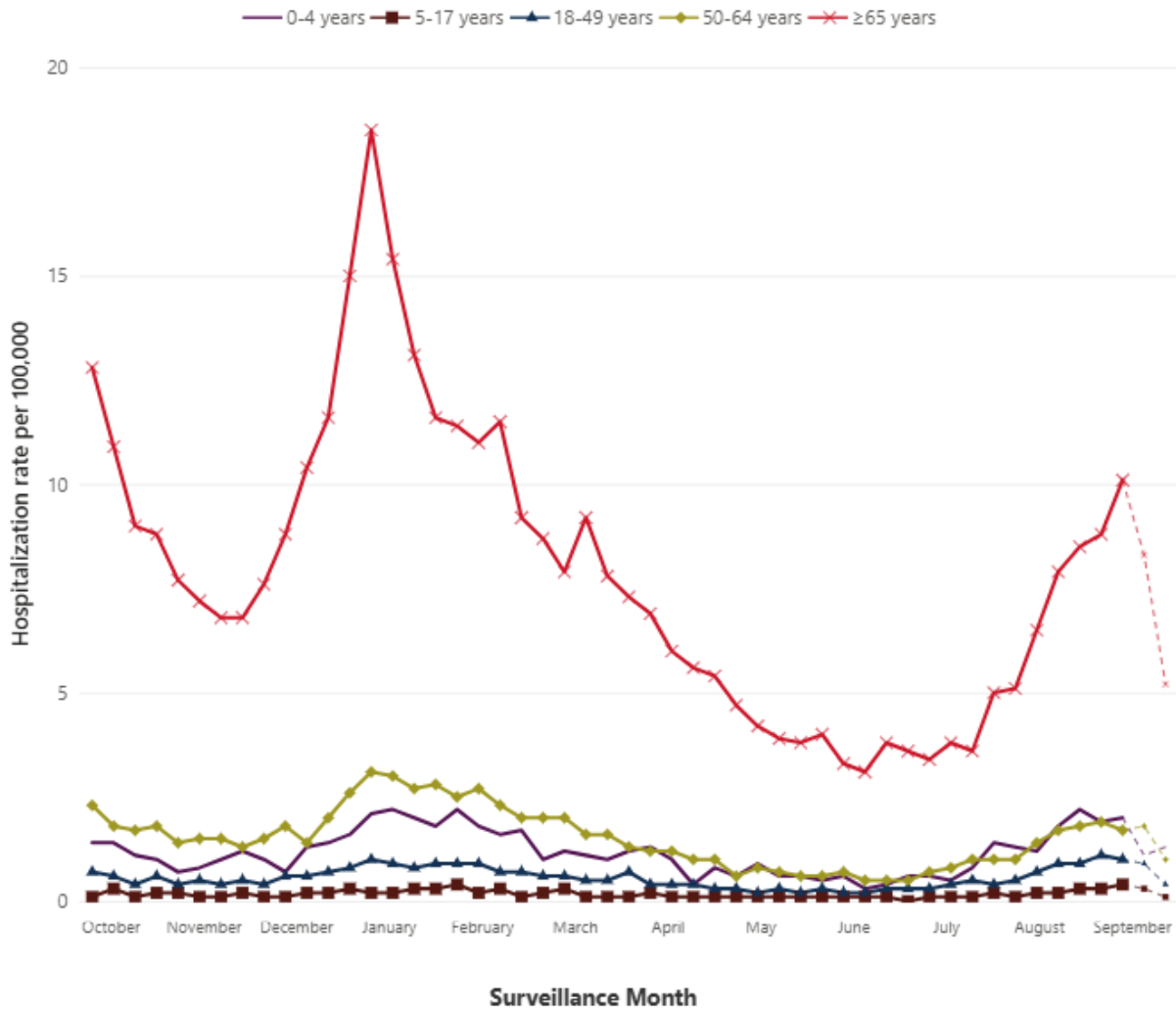
Data from previous seasons showed that the 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine was [about 50% effective](#) at preventing hospitalizations within the first 4 months after vaccination.

In a recent study conducted by the [Veterans Affairs \(VA\) St. Louis Health Care System](#) the estimated effectiveness of last year's COVID-19 vaccine among US veterans was 29% against related emergency departments (ED) visits, 39% against related hospitalization, and 64% against death.

Below is a graph from the [CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#) comparing the rates of COVID-19 associated hospitalizations over the course of a year. People 65 years of age and older have consistently accounted for a larger share of COVID-19 associated hospitalization and deaths throughout the entire pandemic and since.

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### Weekly Rates of COVID-19 Associated Hospitalizations by Age Group, 2024-25



Data last updated: 9/25/2025 | Accessibility: Select (Enter) the graph area and press Alt + Shift + F11 to view the data as a table. Press ? to view more keyboard shortcuts.

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