



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, older adults have experienced the highest hospitalization rates of any age group. During the Delta and Omicron periods, the proportion of adults 65 and older who were hospitalized increased compared to previous periods in the pandemic. [Data suggests](#) that a majority of COVID-19 hospitalizations between October 2023 and March 2024 were among this group.

Over 1.2 million deaths [have been reported](#) in the U.S. from COVID-19, and most of these deaths are among those 65 and older. Notably, people 65 and older account for only 16% of the total U.S. population but have represented [75% of all COVID-19 deaths](#) to date. In October 2022, [9 out of 10 deaths](#) from the virus in our country were among those 65 and older.

Only 4 in 10 older adults in the North Dakota were considered up to date on COVID-19 vaccination in 2023-2024

For this upcoming season, most individuals will be [considered up to date on COVID-19 vaccination](#) if they have received just one updated COVID-19 vaccine at least 2 months after getting the last dose of any COVID-19 vaccine.

Only [36.7%](#) of North Dakotans 65 and older received a dose of the previously authorized bivalent COVID-19 vaccine. When looking specifically at [nursing home residents and staff](#) as of August 2024, over 40% of residents but **less than 10% of nursing home health care staff** were up to date on COVID-19 vaccination in ND.

Additional doses

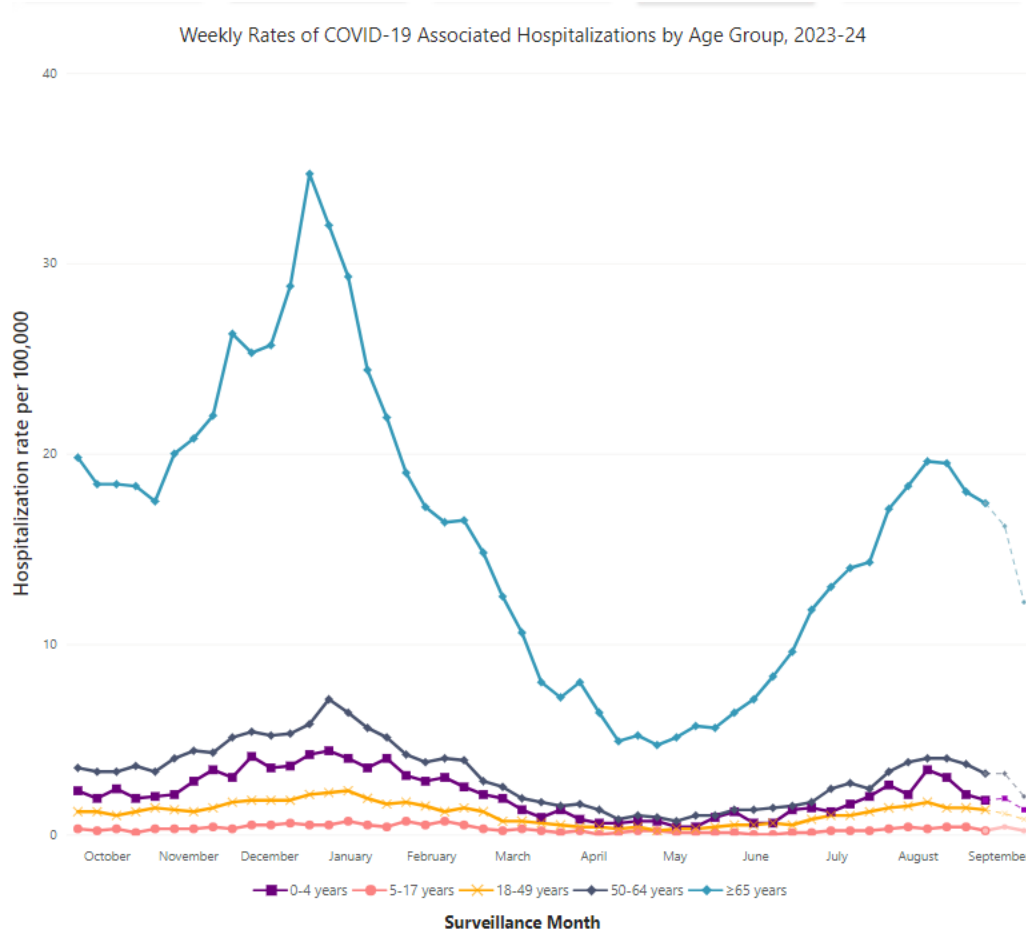
The CDC recommends moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals to receive anywhere from 1 to 3 doses of updated COVID-19 vaccine. The number of doses recommended depends on the individual's vaccination history and vaccine manufacturer. After this initial series, the CDC allows this group to receive an additional COVID-19 vaccine dose. Any additional doses beyond that may be administered, informed by clinical judgement from a healthcare provider and personal preference and circumstances. This recommendation applies to [moderately to severely immunocompromised](#) individuals only. **Healthy adults 65 years of age and older are not allowed to receive an additional dose at this time.** Individuals who have questions are recommended to contact their healthcare provider, local health department, or state health department.

Updated vaccine provides additional protection against COVID-19

The updated COVID-19 vaccine provides protection against more prevalent variants. COVID-19 vaccines can help protect against severe COVID-19 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 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine was about [50% effective](#) at preventing hospitalizations within the first 3 months after vaccination.

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 and older have consistently accounted for a larger share of COVID-19 associated hospitalization and deaths throughout the entire pandemic.



While high initial vaccination rates among this age group have given hope and [saved many lives](#), it is very important for older adults to stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccination to prevent severe COVID-19 outcomes. Currently available [vaccines](#) and [treatments](#) are our best fight against this virus, particularly among the older population.