



Updated (Bivalent) 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 of time in the pandemic. [Data suggests](#) that 90% of COVID-19 hospitalizations during the most recent Omicron wave were among this group.

Over 1.1 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 United States are considered up to date on COVID-19 vaccination

Most individuals are [considered up to date on COVID-19 vaccination](#) if they have received just one bivalent COVID-19 vaccine.

Only 47.9% of North Dakotans 65 and older have received a dose of bivalent COVID-19 vaccine dose. When looking specifically at [nursing home residents and staff](#) in late April 2023, only 50% of residents and less than one quarter of nursing home health care staff were up to date on COVID-19 vaccination in the U.S.

Additional bivalent doses

Starting April 2023, CDC's recommendations allow an additional, updated (bivalent) vaccine dose for adults ages 65 years and older. Protection against hospitalization and death has waned over time in this population. An additional bivalent dose for individuals 65 and older, and immunocompromised individuals, restores protection against severe disease that wanes over time.

Individuals 65 years of age and older who have received a single dose of a bivalent vaccine may receive one additional dose at least four months following their initial bivalent dose.

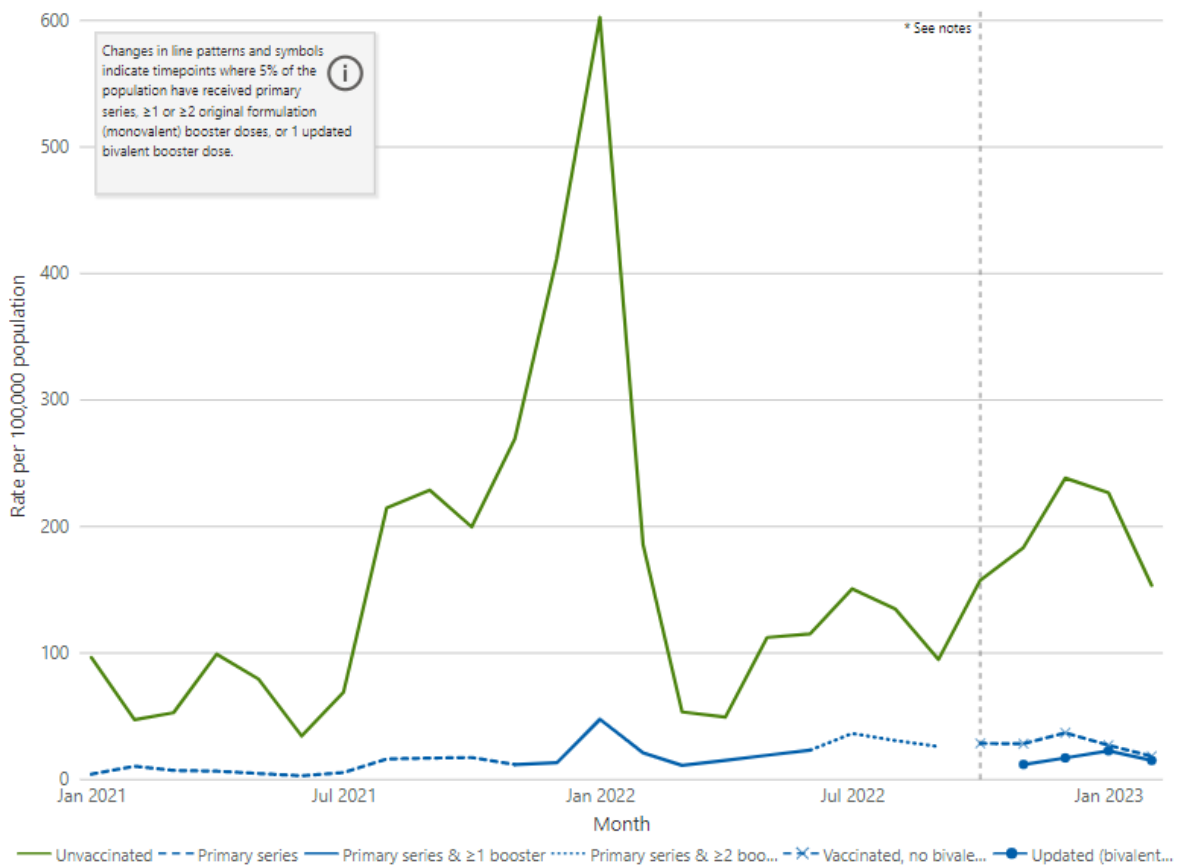
Updated (bivalent) vaccine provides additional protection against COVID-19

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.

Updated bivalent vaccine provides protection against the original virus strain and the more recently circulating Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 variants. [Data out of Canada](#) suggests that individuals 70 years and older who have received under two doses of COVID-19 vaccination have 10 times greater risk of hospitalization, and 15-17 times higher risk of dying, from COVID-19 compared to those who are one month out from a fourth dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Furthermore, [recent data](#) shows that people who received the updated vaccine were 15 times less likely to die from COVID-19 compared to people who are not vaccinated.

Below is a graph from the [CDC Data Tracker](#) comparing the rates of COVID-19 associated hospitalization by vaccination status. In February 2023, compared to adults 18 years and older who received an updated COVID-19 bivalent dose, monthly rates of COVID-19 associated hospitalizations were 10.4 times higher in unvaccinated individuals, and 1.2 times higher in vaccinated adults without an updated bivalent vaccine.

Monthly Age-Adjusted Rates of COVID-19-Associated Hospitalization by Vaccination Status
in Patients Ages ≥18 Years January 2021 - February 2023



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.