COVID-19 Vaccine
Frequently Asked Questions
March 25, 2024
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New/Updated Information is highlighted in yellow.

Contents

Terms to Remember

Variants: The virus has changed over time. Variants are different versions of the virus.

2023 – 2024 COVID-19 vaccines: Vaccinations designed to protect against the Omicron XBB.1.5 sub-lineage of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Up to Date: Adults and children 5 years and older are up to date with COVID-19 vaccines if they have received one updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine dose.

Adverse Event: Any undesirable experience associated with the use of a medical product.

Antibodies: Proteins that the human body makes to fight off organisms like bacteria and viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19.

Monoclonal Antibodies: Laboratory-made proteins that mimic the immune system's ability to fight off viruses like COVID-19.

Public Health Emergency (PHE): An event or imminent threat of an illness or health condition, either natural or manmade, that poses a substantial health risk to the public.

Cost Sharing: When people pay for a portion of health care costs such as deductibles, co-insurance, and co-payments.

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP): Government-funded health insurance for children of uninsured families that do not qualify for Medicaid.

Telehealth/telemedicine: Health care services are provided remotely (via computer or phone) in place of an in-person office visit.

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP): A group of medical and public health experts that develop recommendations on the use of vaccines in the civilian population of the United States.

Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC): An advisory committee to the FDA comprised of public health and medical experts that reviews and evaluates data concerning the safety, effectiveness, and appropriate use of vaccines and related biological products.

Vaccines for Children (VFC): A federally funded and state-operated program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who might otherwise not be vaccinated because of inability to pay.

Bridge Access Program: The CDC's Bridge Access Program, which is managed through the existing 317 program, provides no-cost COVID-19 vaccines to adults without health insurance and adults whose insurance does not cover all COVID-19 vaccine costs. Through this program, adults who are uninsured or underinsured will be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccines at no out-of-pocket cost to them until December 31, 2024.

Long COVID: Can include a wide range of ongoing health problems; these conditions can last weeks, months, or years and are found more often in people who had severe COVID-19 illness, but anyone who has been infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 can experience Post-COVID Conditions. Other names for long covid include post-COVID condition, long-haul COVID, post-acute COVID-19, long-term effects of COVID, and chronic COVID. The term post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC) is also used to refer to a subset of Long COVID.

Commercialization- The transition of COVID-19 medical countermeasures, including vaccines, treatments, and test kits previously purchased by the U.S. Government (USG),

to established pathways of procurement, distribution, and payment by both public and private payers**.**

Multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS) A rare but serious condition associated with COVID-19 in which different internal and external body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal tract. MIS can affect children (MIS-C) and adults (MIS-A).

Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine

Where do we stand with COVID-19 now?
COVID-19 is not gone. The CDC recommends that everyone take precautions to stay safe including:

- Keeping up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations and wearing a mask in areas where COVID-19 levels are high.
- Staying at home when feeling sick and using at-home testing if you suspect you have been exposed to the virus.

It is important to remember that people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised may have different recommendations for COVID-19 vaccinations. COVID-19 activity reports, and knowing how to protect yourself and others will help you and your loved ones stay safe and healthy.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine necessary?
Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines protect people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and dying from COVID-19. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer, more reliable way to build protection than getting sick with COVID-19. Also, vaccination remains the best way to avoid hospitalizations, long-term health problems, and death. COVID-19 vaccine recommendations are based on the:

- Age, the vaccine product first received, the length of time that has passed since receiving the last dose, and immune system function.
- Local COVID-19 hospital admission level, especially if it is high.
- COVID-19 variants that are most common in the community and if they are causing illness.

What is the difference between the previous bivalent COVID-19 vaccine and the new 2023 - 2024 COVID-19 vaccine? What are the current recommendations for the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine?
The 2023-2024 vaccine will protect against a newer variant of the COVID-19 virus – XBB.1.5. The COVID-19 virus continues to change so the vaccine must get updated to protect against these newer variants of the virus. This is similar to the flu vaccine that is updated each year. **Bivalent mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) are no longer approved for use and should no longer be given to the public.**

- **CDC recommends everyone 6 months of age and older get the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine if it has been at least two months since their last COVID-19 vaccine.**

- **The number and timing of doses are different for those who are moderately or severely immunocompromised (weakened immune system) and for those who are between 6 months and 4 years old**.
- Get more information about the vaccines from the following fact sheets: Moderna, Pfizer, and Novavax. **Talk to your health care provider for more details.**

Where can I get the new 2023- 2024 COVID-19 vaccine? How will I know if I am up to date with my COVID-19 vaccinations?
You can get the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine in the same places you receive other vaccines like the flu shot. Check with your pharmacy, local health department, community health center or your health care provider to see if the shot is available you can also locate a vaccine provider by visiting, nj.gov/health/vaccines/covid-19. **Be sure to talk with your health care provider to see if you are** up to date **with your COVID-19 vaccinations.**

Can I get the flu, RSV, and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time? If I decide to wait in between vaccines, is there a recommended timeframe?
If you are eligible, you may choose to get flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines at the same visit, making it easier to stay up to date with CDC-recommended vaccines. You may also choose to get your recommended vaccines at separate visits. **For those who get the vaccines at different visits, there is no minimum waiting period between vaccines. If eligible, everyone is encouraged to get all recommended vaccines to protect against these and other potentially serious illnesses during the fall and winter seasons.** For more information, visit Getting Flu, COVID-19, and RSV Vaccines at the Same Time | CDC.

Will getting the flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19?
Influenza viruses and coronaviruses are different and getting a flu vaccine **will not** protect against COVID-19.

Can I receive the mpox (formerly monkeypox) vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time?
People who previously received mpox vaccination (either JYNNEOS or ACAM2000), **particularly adolescent or young adult males** (between the ages of 12 and 39), might consider waiting four weeks before receiving a COVID-19 vaccine because of the possible risk for myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart) after receipt of ACAM2000 vaccine and COVID-19 vaccines and the unknown risk for myocarditis and pericarditis after JYNNEOS vaccine. However, if you are at risk for catching mpox or at risk for becoming seriously ill from COVID-19, be sure to first speak with your health

care provider in order to see which vaccines are right for you and to avoid delays in vaccinating against COVID-19 and mpox. For more information on mpox, visit mpox FAQs, NJDOH.

Does it matter if my child receives Moderna or Pfizer?
No. Both vaccines are safe and effective. If your child is 6 months – 4 years of age, two doses of Moderna are recommended to complete the primary series, and three doses of Pfizer are recommended. These are the number of doses that are studied by the manufacturer, authorized by the FDA, and recommended by the CDC. People can choose whether they want the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. For current information on the types and use of available COVID-19 vaccines, visit CDC COVID-19 vaccines.

What if I cannot leave my home, how will I get the COVID-19 vaccine?
If you are homebound, you can request an in-home vaccination appointment by completing an online survey. If you are the health care provider or family caregiver of someone who is homebound, you may request an in-home vaccination appointment by completing an online survey. To locate in-home vaccination services or a provider, you can also contact the following:

- **Your health care, home care, or hospice provider**
- **Hotline for Medicare recipients at 1-800-633-4227 (TTY 1-877-486-2048).**
- **Dial 2-1-1 to speak with someone or search for online vaccination resources by typing 211 into your internet browser.**
- **Disability Information and Access Line (DIAL) 1-888-677-1199**
- **Services for older adults and their families, visit the Eldercare Locator or call 1-800-677-1116.**

Is the New Jersey COVID-19 Call Center Closing?
- **As part of the transition to routine, commercial access to COVID-19 vaccines, the New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Call Center is closing operations on March 28, 2024.**
- **Residents can continue to call the national COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline at 1-800-232-0233, where assistance is available in English, Spanish, and other languages.**
- **Deaf and hard of hearing individuals can call TTY 1-888-720-7489.**
- **Persons with disabilities can seek COVID-19 vaccination support through the Disability Information and Access Line at 1-888-677-1199.**
- **During the transition, calls to the New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Call Center will be rerouted to the national COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline.**

What about equity with the COVID-19 vaccine?
The New Jersey Department of Health and the CDC are committed to ensuring that everyone has fair access to COVID-19 vaccines There are many factors that create challenges for racial and ethnic minorities, as well as other at-risk groups. For more information, visit CDC COVID Data Tracker: Health Equity Data.

What are the recommendations for those people who received COVID-19 vaccine outside of the United States?

The recommendations for people vaccinated outside of the United States
depend on the number and type of vaccine(s) received. Talk with your health care provider to see if you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines given to children the same as the vaccines given to adults?

The COVID-19 vaccines for children have the same active ingredients as the vaccines given to adults. However, some children receive a smaller, age-appropriate dose that is the right size for them. The smaller doses were rigorously tested and found to create the needed immune response for each age group. Children should get the vaccine made for their age group.

Why should children receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine will prevent children from getting seriously sick if they do get COVID-19 and it will also:

- Protect children with underlying medical conditions from getting severely ill from COVID-19 as well as children **without** underlying medical conditions who can also experience severe illness.
- Give parents or caregivers greater confidence for children to participate in childcare and school and in sports, playdates, extracurricular activities, and other group activities.
- Parents/guardians can get their children vaccinated by calling their health care provider to make an appointment, or by visiting Vaccines.gov or by contacting the National COVID-19 Hotline at 1-800-232-0233.

Did the ACIP require the COVID-19 vaccine for children?

The ACIP meets every year to review the vaccination schedule and make updates. This year, they recommended to include COVID-19 vaccine on the routine childhood vaccination schedule. The recommended immunization schedule is not a vaccine mandate. States and local jurisdictions make their own rules about which vaccines are required for school attendance. For more information visit, ACIP Vaccine Recommendations and Schedules | CDC.
For more information about New Jersey's immunization requirements for schools visit nj.gov/health/cd/imm_requirements/.

Is COVID-19 vaccine required for school attendance in New Jersey?

Currently, COVID-19 vaccination is not a requirement for school attendance (K-12) in New Jersey However, NJDOH strongly recommends that everyone should be up to date with age-appropriate vaccinations, per CDC's ACIP recommendations. Individuals and families should discuss their concerns with their health care providers. It is important to remember that the recommended immunization schedule is not a vaccine mandate; states and local jurisdictions make their own rules about which vaccines are required for school attendance

Vaccine Safety Considerations
Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?

To date, almost 700 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been given in the United States, and multiple safety systems continue to show they are safe.

- Side effects after a COVID-19 vaccine are common, however, severe allergic reactions after getting a COVID-19 vaccine are **rare**.
- There are also specific safety monitoring systems for the general population as well as for pregnant people, tribal nations, and others.
- **None , and they do not affect or interact with your DNA. COVID-19 vaccine ingredients are considered safe for most people.**
- **The benefits of COVID-19 vaccination continue to outweigh any known or potential risks**.

What is V-safe and what vaccines are being monitored in V-safe?

- V-safe is a vaccine safety monitoring system that lets people share with CDC how they feel after getting the vaccine for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and or any of the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines.
- The updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines were recently added to the V-safe monitoring system on or about January, 31, 2024.

What is severe COVID-19 and am I at risk for it? If I am at risk, what can I do to protect myself? COVID-19 can affect anyone and can cause symptoms ranging from mild to very severe. Severe COVID-19 is when someone gets so sick from COVID-19 that they need to be hospitalized or put in the intensive care unit, they may need a breathing machine (ventilator) or may even die.

- Some people are more likely than others to get very sick if they get COVID-19. This includes people who are older, are immunocompromised, have certain disabilities, or have underlying health conditions.
- Understanding your COVID-19 risk and the risks that might affect others can help you make decisions to protect yourself and others.
- Staying up to date **with your COVID-19 vaccines is the best way to protect yourself and others around you from getting very sick, being hospitalized, or dying from COVID-19.**

What do I need to know about Long COVID or Post Covid Conditions?
Long COVID can include a wide range of ongoing health problems; these conditions can last weeks, months, or years. People not vaccinated against COVID-19 and who become infected may have a higher risk of developing post-COVID conditions compared to people previously vaccinated.

- Health inequities may put some people from racial or ethnic minority groups and some people with disabilities at greater risk for developing Long COVID. Scientists are researching some of those factors that may place these communities at higher risk.
- If you are concerned about Long COVID, speak with your health care provider and visit Long COVID or Post-COVID Conditions | CDC.

What is an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may issue an EUA to help make medical products available as quickly as possible by allowing unapproved medical products to reach patients in need when there are no adequate FDA-approved and available alternatives. The known and potential benefits of the product must outweigh the known and potential risks of the product to grant an EUA. Learn more about the EUA process by watching the following video: EUA Process.

What is the difference between EUA and full approval?
In an emergency, when lives are at risk, like a pandemic, it may not be possible to have all the evidence that the FDA would usually have before approving a vaccine or drug. If there's evidence that strongly suggests that patients have benefited from a treatment, the agency can issue an EUA to make it available. For the COVID-19 vaccines, FDA required two months of safety and efficacy data before granting the EUA. That included clinical trials with tens of thousands of people and rigorous testing and review, and all the vaccines continue to be closely monitored. Since the EUA has been granted, many more people have received the COVID-19 vaccines and the data continues to show that the vaccines are safe and effective. Compared to EUAs, FDA approval of vaccines requires even more data on safety. The Moderna (Spikevax) and Pfizer (Comirnaty) vaccines for persons 12 years of age and older have received FDA approval.

What are the side effects of the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine?
In clinical trials, the most common side effects experienced by all age groups included: pain, soreness, and or swelling where the injection was given, tiredness, muscle aches, headaches, irritability and crying in younger children. Severe allergic reactions were rare. In clinical trials, most symptoms were mild to moderate, typically began one to two days after vaccination, and ended after one to two days.

What if I or my loved ones have had an allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, can I still get the vaccine?
If you or a loved one have had an allergic reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine, you may still be able to receive a COVDID-19 vaccine. Before scheduling a vaccine appointment, speak with your health care provider to determine if you are eligible and what options you may have.

What about heart problems like myocarditis and pericarditis?
- The risk of having a serious reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine is very low. Rare cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart) have been reported. New studies have shown the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis associated with mRNA COVID-19 vaccination—mostly among males between the ages of 12 and 39 years—may be further reduced with a longer time between the first and second dose.
- ACIP and CDC determined that the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination (e.g., prevention of COVID-19 and its severe outcomes) outweigh the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis in all populations recommended for vaccination. In fact, the chance of

developing cardiac complications after COVID-19 infection is higher than after receiving the vaccine. If you currently have heart problems or have had heart problems, speak with your health care provider about getting the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine.

Where can I learn more about vaccine safety and how to report a side effect? What has changed with the safety monitoring systems for COVID-19 vaccines?
There are different systems that are still in place to monitor vaccine safety, including the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System.](#) For more information, visit, [Ensuring COVID-19 Vaccine Safety in the US | CDC](#).

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect the menstrual cycle (period)?
Results from recent research studies show that people who menstruate **may observe small, temporary changes in menstruation** after COVID-19 vaccination, including:
- Longer duration of menstrual periods
- Shorter intervals between periods
- Heavier bleeding than usual.

It is important to remember that despite these temporary changes in menstruation, there is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems.

Should people who are pregnant or breastfeeding receive the COVID-19 vaccine?
Yes, research has shown that pregnant individuals with COVID-19 who were not vaccinated for COVID-19, are at a much higher risk for developing serious illness and complications than pregnant people who were vaccinated for COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine can protect you and your unborn child from severe illness and pregnancy complications from COVID-19. For more information, visit [Pregnant and Recently Pregnant People | CDC](#) and [COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#).

For more information about COVID-19 vaccine and common myths, visit [Myths and Facts about COVID-19, CDC](#)

If you are eligible and it has been at least two months since your last COVID-19 shot be sure to get the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine to stay safe especially during the fall and winter seasons.

Vaccination remains the [best protection](#) against COVID-19-related hospitalization and death. Vaccination also reduces the chance of people suffering the effects of [Long COVID](#), which can develop during or after being sick with COVID-19. Long Covid can last for an extended period.

The Bridge Access Program, Vaccines for (VFC) Children, and the Vaccine Administration System (VAMS)

Do I have to pay for the COVID-19 vaccines?
Most vaccines, treatments, and testing, are available **but coverage for the costs of these items may vary depending on the type of insurance you have (e.g., private insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and underinsured/uninsured).**
- Vaccines will remain free for most people through the Vaccines for Children Program, the 317/Bridge Access Program, most commercial/private insurance, Medicare, and most Medicaid programs like the Family Care Plan A.
- There are free at home tests available through the federal government but there may be costs associated with other types of testing. For more information, visit COVID-19 Testing: What You Need to Know | CDC.

For details about how the ending of the public health emergency has affected services and treatments for COVID-19, visit End of the Federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) Declaration | CDC. For a cost summary of COVID-19 services, visit PHE Cost Summary Chart.docx (nrcrim.org).

What is the Bridge Access Program for COVID-19, who is covered, and what services are offered? Where can I find no-cost COVID-19 vaccines under the Bridge Access Program?
CDC's Bridge Access Program provides free COVID-19 vaccines to adults, (18+ years), without health insurance and adults whose insurance does not cover all COVID-19 vaccine costs. **Currently, the program supports only COVID-19 vaccinations for under and uninsured adults**. This program will end by June 30, 2025. COVID-19 vaccines will be given at local pharmacies, federally qualified health centers, local health departments, and health care provider offices.
- **To find a 317/Bridge Access Provider/vaccines,** visit COVID-19 (nj.gov) or Vaccines.gov.
- **To find an independent pharmacy enrolled through eTruenorth**, visit COVID-19 Access (covidaccess.com). For more information, visit Bridge Access Program for COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments (apha.org)

Are the 2023 -2024 COVID-19 vaccines available through the Vaccines for Children program? Where can I find COVID-19 vaccines offered under the VFC program?
Yes. There are over 750 enrolled VFC providers in the State of New Jersey including but not limited to private practices, local health departments, and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC). Not all VFC providers have a supply of the vaccines. However, it is expected that all VFC providers will carry the vaccine. Children who meet at least one of the following criteria are eligible to receive ACIP-approved vaccines through VFC, including the updated COVID-19 vaccine:
- Uninsured or, underinsured.
- Medicaid-enrolled in the Family Care A plan
- American Indian/Alaska Native

- Underinsured children can only get vaccines at a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). To find an FQHC visit Centers for Primary Health Care (state.nj.us) or the 211 online list of community clinics.
- For more information about VFC, visit For the Public (nj.gov).
- To find vaccines, visit COVID-19 (nj.gov)

What is the benefit of adding COVID-19 vaccines to those available through the VFC program?

Providing COVID-19 vaccines through the VFC Program ensures equitable access to the vaccines as COVID-19 vaccines are now commercialized. For more information about the federal VFC program, visit cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/parents/index.html.

What is the Docket® App and how does it help me?

Docket connects patients' directly with immunization registries (including the New Jersey Immunization Information System, or (NJIIS) to deliver up-to-date personal and family immunization records, including COVID-19. **Availability of vaccination records is dependent upon health care providers submitting that information to NJIIS.**

- People can use the Docket app to provide proof of vaccination status as needed.
- Docket will support **access to immunization records** beginning with app version 2.2.44.
- If you do not see all immunization types represented in the Docket app make sure you download the latest app update from the Apple Store or Google Play Store. For more information about Docket, visit How to use the docket app and request an immunization record.

I heard vaccines will be entered into NJIIS? What is NJIIS?

The New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIIS), operating since 1997, is a free, confidential, population-based online system that collects and consolidates immunization information to provide an accurate immunization record for individuals in New Jersey. For more information, visit NJIIS_Your_Best_Shot.pdf.

What else can I use the CDC's Vaccine Administration Management Sysytem (VAMS) for besides scheduling COVID-19 vaccine appointments?

VAMS, is an easy-to-use, secure, online tool developed by the CDC to manage COVID-19 vaccine administration from the time the vaccine arrives at a clinic until it is administered to a recipient **and can be used to:**

- Update your information, schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment, for yourself or someone else at a vaccination clinic, or manage a current appointment.
- Pre-register for a vaccine without scheduling an appointment.
- For more information, visit VAMS Vaccine Recipient (Guest) Registration | CDC.

The Effectiveness of COVID-19 Vaccines

Are COVID-19 vaccines effective?

Yes, COVID-19 vaccines are effective.

Vaccination reduces the risk of COVID-19 and its potentially severe complications. All COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for use in the United States helped protect people against COVID-19, including severe illness, in clinical trial settings.

If I had COVID-19 and recovered, do I need to get the COVID-19 vaccine?
- Getting a COVID-19 vaccine after you recover from COVID-19 infection provides added protection against the virus. **You may consider delaying your vaccine by three months from when your symptoms started or, if you had no symptoms, when you received a positive test.**
- People who already had COVID-19 and do not get vaccinated after their recovery are more likely to get COVID-19 again than those who get vaccinated after their recovery.

If I am currently sick with COVID-19 illness, can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?
- No. Anyone *currently* infected with COVID-19 should wait to get vaccinated until after their illness has resolved.
- In addition, people who have had a known COVID-19 exposure should not seek vaccination to avoid potentially exposing health care personnel and others during the vaccination visit.
- Talk to your health care provider if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

If a person recovered from multisystem inflammatory syndrome in adults (MIS-A) or children (MIS-C), can they still get vaccinated?
- The CDC recommends that individuals with a history of MIS-A or MIS-C get vaccinated against COVID-19 as the benefits outweigh the risks of potential recurrence or myocarditis, provided they meet specific criteria which include a return to normal heart function and a minimum of 90 days after diagnosis of MIS-C or MIS-A.
- For those who do not meet the criteria, the decision to vaccinate should be left to their health care provider. Other factors like clinical recovery, medical therapies, age, and existing medical conditions must also be considered.

Talk to your health care provider about COVID-19 vaccination. Parents can visit, [COVID-19 vaccination and MIS-C](#) and [Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19 | CDC](#) .

For more information about MIS-A and MIS-C, visit [Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Adults (MIS-A) (cdc.gov) and](#) [Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS) (cdc.gov)](#).

COVID-19 Data and Surveillance

How are COVID-19 transmission levels being monitored now?
Monitoring the impact of COVID-19 and evaluating prevention measures remains a top priority for public health. For information on New Jersey's metrics, visit [Department of Health | Communicable Disease Service | New Jersey COVID-19 Dashboard (nj.gov)](#). For CDC metrics, visit [Data & Surveillance | CDC](#).

Where can I find information about the wastewater surveillance program?
Users can now explore national, regional, and state trends of COVID-19 virus detected in wastewater in all 50 states, U.S. territories, and select tribal nations. Site-level data for COVID-19 virus in wastewater continues to be available on [CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#). For more information about New Jersey's program, visit the [Department of Health | Public Health and Environmental Laboratories | Wastewater Surveillance (nj.gov).](#)

Medical Therapies & Testing

Are monoclonal antibodies, like Evusheld, still used to treat people that are at high risk for getting very sick from COVID-19?
No, the use of monoclonal antibodies is no longer authorized by the FDAas a pre-treatment for preventing COVID-19 in individuals at high risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19. The emergency authorizations were removed as the FDA's data revealed that monoclonal antibodies do not appear to protect high risk individuals from contracting COVID-19 when exposed to the omicron subvariants that are currently circulating in the United States.

If I received monoclonal antibodies, when should I get vaccinated?
If you are eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations, you should not have to wait to get vaccinated after receiving monoclonal antibodies. Speak with your health care provider**.**

Are COVID-19 anti-viral treatments, like Legevrio and Paxlovid still free? Is there a new home test-to treat option for COVID-19?
- Yes, there is a new home [test-to-treat option for COVID-19,](#) register now to access treatment for COVID-19 and flu, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Sign up anytime, whether you are sick or not.
- Effective December 2023, Paxlovid and Legevrio, transitioned to the commercial market but continue to be available for most people at no cost.
- It is important to remember that these treatments must **be started within 5–7 days from the start of symptoms. Do not delay speaking with your health care provider about getting started with treatment.** For more information, visit [COVID-19 Treatments and Medications | CDC](#).
- Learn more about people who are at increased risk for developing severe complications from COVID-19 illness by visiting [People With Certain Medical Conditions](#).

Have there been any changes about the public obtaining free rapid home COVID-19 tests from the Federal Government?
Yes, ordering free rapid home tests through the US Government has been suspended. All orders placed on or before March 8, 2024, will be delivered. For more information, visit [COVID-19 Testing | COVID.gov.](#)
- **For details about testing, visit [No-Cost COVID-19 Testing (cdc.gov).](#)**

- **For more information about rapid home tests and their expiration dates, visit, At-Home OTC COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests | FDA.**
- **For finding expiration date extensions, visit**, At-Home OTC COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests | FDA.
- For additional information on reading and understanding your test results, visit Understanding At-Home OTC COVID-19 Antigen Diagnostic Test Results | FDA.

Where can I find free community-based testing sites for COVID-19?
- The U.S. government will continue to make COVID-19 tests available to uninsured individuals and underserved communities through existing outreach programs.
- Contact an HRSA health center, Test to Treat site, or ICATT location near you to learn how to access low- or no-cost COVID-19 tests provided by the federal government.
- People with urgent symptoms may also continue to access services at acute care hospitals. The COVID-19 testing cost will be waived for uninsured individuals eligible for charity care. Information on the Charity Care Program can be found at, this link.
- Remember that testing and other protective steps like wearing a mask and COVID-19 vaccination are important to stop the spread of COVID-19 infection.

Locating COVID-19 Vaccines and Health Education Materials

COVID-19 Vaccines
- **For VFC, Bridge Access Program, and those with health insurance-**COVID-19 (nj.gov). **For Bridge Access Program (For appointments at CVS or Walgreens) -**Vaccines.gov - Find COVID-19 vaccine locations near you or COVID-19 (nj.gov).
- **To find an independent drug store enrolled through eTruenorth -**COVID-19 Access(covidaccess.com)
- **For Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)**- Centers for Primary Health Care (state.nj.us) Children who are **UNDERINSURED** can only receive their vaccines from an FQHC.
- **To locate COVID-19 vaccine providers/sites**- COVID-19 Vaccines (nj.gov) or call **the CDC's National COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline, at 1-800-232-0233.**
- **For veterans, their caregivers, and spouses, they may be eligible** for free COVID-19 vaccines. Check eligibility by visiting, COVID-19 Vaccines at VA | Veterans Affairs.
- **Check the community calendar for** pop-up or mobile vaccination events in your area.
- **Use VAMS by visiting** Getting Started in VAMS | CDC and Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS) (cdc.gov).

Educational information about COVID-19
- New Jersey Department of Health | Communicable Disease Service | COVID-19 Vaccination (nj.gov).