



National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD)

Immunization and Respiratory Diseases Bulletin

Updates from CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

[Updates](#) from CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

Additional Data

- [COVID Variant Proportions](#)
- [COVID Data Tracker](#)
- [Respiratory Virus Hospitalization Surveillance Network](#)

[CDC's Updated Respiratory Virus Guidance: What to Do When You Are Sick](#)

March 1, 2024, 3:40 PM EDT

What CDC knows

As the 2023-2024 fall and winter virus season ends, it's clear that the situation surrounding COVID-19 has changed. It is still an important health threat, but it is no longer the emergency that it once was, and its health impacts increasingly resemble those of other respiratory viral illnesses, including flu and RSV.

What CDC is doing

CDC released updated Respiratory Virus Guidance in response to the decreasing risk that COVID-19 poses to the population. This updated Guidance includes strategies to protect people at highest risk of getting seriously ill and provides actionable recommendations for people with common viral respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, flu, and RSV.

Keep reading: [CDC's Updated Respiratory Virus Guidance: What to do When You Are Sick](#)

[The Changing Threat of COVID-19](#)

February 23, 2024, 6:15 PM EDT

What CDC knows

The impact of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has changed dramatically since 2020. Although COVID-19 remains common, when compared to 2020, individual infections are less likely to result in severe illness for most people in the United States. COVID-19 poses the highest risk for older adults, infants, and people with pre-existing medical conditions, and there are multiple ways people and communities can help reduce their risk of infection.

What CDC is doing

CDC continues to partner with state and local health authorities to collect and share data on COVID-19 community spread, hospitalizations, deaths, and Long COVID. Additionally, CDC continues to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and treatment strategies for the virus in order to provide the public the best evidence-based recommendations for reducing their risk from COVID-19.

Keep reading: [The Changing Threat of COVID-19](#)

2023-2024 Respiratory Virus Season Is Likely Past Peak but Far from Over

February 16, 2024, 5:20 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Hospital admissions for COVID-19, flu, and RSV have been declining in most parts of the country for the past few weeks. Some key indicators, however, show that flu activity is rising again in some parts of the United States. CDC expects many more weeks of respiratory disease circulation and possibly a second wave of flu activity.

What CDC is doing

CDC continues to track indicators of respiratory virus activity. You can protect yourself by staying up to date on your [vaccines](#) and with timely use of [testing](#), [treatment](#), and other measures.

Keep reading: [2023-2024 Respiratory Virus Season Is Likely Past Peak but Far from Over](#)

CDC Tracks New SARS-CoV-2 Variant, BA.2.87.1

February 9, 2024, 4:20 PM EDT

What CDC knows

BA.2.87.1, a new variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, was identified in South Africa by the [National Institute for Communicable Diseases](#). CDC is closely tracking this variant because of the large number of mutations when compared to previous variants. At this time, BA.2.87.1 has not been identified in clinical specimens outside South Africa. Because this is a newly emerging variant, there is not as much additional data about its potential impact. So far, the public health risk for this new variant appears low.

What CDC is doing

CDC continues to track the appearance and spread of new variants around the world through genomic surveillance. CDC is working closely with partners in South Africa to gather the latest information on BA.2.87.1. CDC and its partners are continually assessing potential impacts to vaccines, tests, and treatments.

Keep reading: [CDC Tracks New SARS-CoV-2 Variant, BA.2.87.1](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness

February 1, 2024, 1:05 PM EDT

What CDC knows

New CDC data show that the updated COVID-19 vaccines were effective against COVID-19 during September 2023 – January 2024, including against the different circulating virus variants such as JN.1 and XBB. Getting vaccinated now can help lower the risk of becoming infected with or dying from COVID-19. CDC recommends everyone 6 months or older receive the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine.

What CDC is doing

CDC analyzes circulating variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 and assesses how well COVID-19 vaccines protect people. We do this by looking at vaccine effectiveness against infection with symptoms or against severe disease, including hospitalization and death. Through [CDC's Bridge Access Program](#), COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost to people who are uninsured or underinsured.

Keep reading: [COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness](#)

Influenza Viruses Spreading This Season and Update on JN.1 Variant

January 22, 2024, 5:15 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Respiratory disease activity in the United States remains high despite recent declines in some indicators. Influenza (flu) is currently the respiratory virus causing the most emergency department visits. The most common influenza viruses this season are type A(H1N1) and type B viruses. JN.1 continues to be the most widely circulating variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in the United States and around the world.

What CDC is doing

CDC is studying the impacts of COVID-19 and flu illness this season, encouraging vaccination and prompt antiviral treatment for COVID-19 and flu, and studying vaccine effectiveness. CDC is still learning more about the JN.1 variant and tracking its spread.

Keep reading: [Influenza Viruses Spreading This Season and Update on JN.1 Variant](#)

CDC Tracks Hospital Capacity as Respiratory Diseases Continue to Spread

January 12, 2024, 3:45 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Respiratory disease activity remains elevated, in line with projections, with hospital admissions for COVID-19 and flu still high. This could strain hospitals in some areas, making it harder for some patients to get medical care.

What CDC is doing

CDC is using multiple data systems to closely track signs of stress on the healthcare system as hospital admissions are expected to remain elevated. CDC shares these data with partners in federal, state, and local governments to inform healthcare planning and response.

Keep reading: [CDC Tracks Hospital Capacity as Respiratory Diseases Continue to Spread](#)

COVID-19 Activity Increases as Prevalence of JN.1 Variant Continues to Rise

January 5, 2024, 5:45 PM EDT

What CDC knows

The prevalence of the JN.1 variant continues to increase. JN.1 is now the most widely circulating variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in the United States and around the world. Based on current data, available vaccines, tests, and treatments work against JN.1.

What CDC is doing

CDC, in collaboration with state and local public health departments, continues to track SARS-CoV-2 variants present in the United States, including JN.1. There is no evidence at this time that JN.1 causes more severe disease than other circulating variants.

Keep reading: [COVID-19 Activity Increases as Prevalence of JN.1 Variant Continues to Rise](#)

CDC Continues to Track the Growth of JN.1

December 22, 2023, 4:15 PM EDT

What CDC knows

CDC is tracking JN.1, one of many variants of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. As of December 23, 2023, JN.1 is projected to account for approximately [39-50% of circulating variants](#) in the United States. The proportion of JN.1 continues to increase more rapidly than other variants. Based on laboratory data, existing vaccines, tests, and treatments work against JN.1. The JN.1 variant doesn't change how we can [protect ourselves and our communities](#). At this time, the spread of JN.1 [does not appear to pose additional risks](#)  to public health beyond that of other recent variants. CDC is closely monitoring COVID-19 and will communicate if the situation changes.

What CDC is doing

CDC continues to track JN.1 and other emerging variants, in close collaboration with partners around the world. CDC is also closely tracking COVID-19 activity in the United States through [multiple indicators](#).

Keep reading: [CDC Continues to Track the Growth of JN.1](#)

If You Get Sick with COVID-19, Antiviral Treatments Can Protect You Against Severe Illness

December 21, 2023, 5:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Antivirals are an important tool for treating people with COVID-19, yet often are underused. COVID-19 antivirals help reduce hospitalizations and deaths among people at higher risk, especially people 65 years and older and those with certain underlying conditions. COVID-19 hospitalizations are currently on the rise, especially among those over 65 years of age. COVID-19 antivirals need to be prescribed more often to people who are at risk for severe illness to reduce hospitalizations and save lives.

What CDC is doing

CDC is working with healthcare providers and the public to improve understanding of the benefits of antivirals. CDC is also conducting research to better explain uptake and effectiveness of these drugs, as well as supporting treatment access programs, developing clinical resources, and communicating with the public and public health partners. CDC is committed to the equitable access and uptake of antivirals among people who are at higher risk for severe illness.

Keep reading: [If You Get Sick with COVID-19, Antiviral Treatments Can Protect You Against Severe Illness](#)

Peak Season for Respiratory Diseases Is Near: There Is Still Time to Get Vaccinated

December 14, 2023, 5:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Respiratory illness activity is rapidly increasing across the United States, yet vaccination rates for COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) remain low. Millions of people may get sick in the next month or two, and low vaccination rates means more people will get more severe disease. Getting vaccinated now can help prevent hospitalizations and save lives.

What CDC is doing

CDC is reaching out to healthcare providers and clinicians to encourage them to recommend all patients receive all respiratory immunizations they are eligible for. On December 14, CDC issued a [Health Alert Network \(HAN\) advisory](#) to raise awareness about respiratory illness activity and urge action. To increase vaccination coverage, COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost to people who are uninsured or underinsured through the Bridge Access Program.

Keep reading: [Peak Season for Respiratory Diseases Is Near: There Is Still Time to Get Vaccinated](#)

Update on SARS-CoV-2 Variant JN.1 Being Tracked by CDC

December 8, 2023, 11:45 AM EDT

What CDC knows

JN.1, a variant of the virus that causes COVID-19, is a closely related offshoot of the variant [BA.2.86](#) that CDC has been tracking since August. JN.1 is currently projected to comprise 15-29% of circulating variants and continues to grow quickly compared with other variants. Its continued growth suggests that it is either more transmissible or better at evading our immune systems. **At this time, there is no evidence that JN.1 presents an increased risk to public health relative to other currently circulating variants**, and CDC is closely monitoring COVID-19 activity and JN.1 spread. The increase of this variant does not alter [CDC's COVID-19 recommendations](#), meaning that vaccines, tests, and treatments continue to work well against JN.1.

What CDC is doing

CDC will continue to track JN.1 and other variants, working closely with partners around the world, to provide the latest information. It's a great time to get an updated COVID-19 vaccine if you haven't already had one this fall, since infections are likely to increase in the coming weeks, as they tend to do this time of year regardless of variant.

Keep reading:

CDC is tracking a SARS-CoV-2 variant called JN.1 and working to better understand its potential impact on public health. This update follows CDC's most [recent variant update](#) on November 27, 2023.

Find more information about [virus trends in your area](#) and [tips to help you stay healthy during the holidays](#).

Using Wastewater Data to Inform Public Health Action

December 6, 2023, 4:30 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Testing wastewater (sewage) provides timely, actionable data to understand the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 within communities. This makes wastewater monitoring an important tool to detect an increase of COVID-19 in the community. Wastewater data can be used alongside other data such as hospitalizations, visits to the doctor, or testing sick people to give a more complete picture of the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 in your community.

What CDC is doing

CDC launched a new data dashboard that makes it easier to interpret and use wastewater data from CDC's National Wastewater Surveillance System (NWSS). It's now possible to see national, regional, and state trends of COVID-19 spread based on virus levels detected in wastewater in all 50 states, U.S. territories, and select tribal nations. This allows people to monitor wastewater data in their area and see how that compares to the rest of the United States.

Keep reading: [Using Wastewater Data](#)

Pediatric Pneumonia Update

December 1, 2023, 8:30 PM EDT

What CDC knows

CDC has been monitoring increases in respiratory illness recently reported around the world.

What CDC is doing

CDC uses multiple data sources to monitor for increases in respiratory illness. CDC is also collaborating with state and local public health departments to closely monitor pediatric pneumonia cases in the United States.

Keep reading: [Pediatric Pneumonia Update](#)

Update on SARS-CoV-2 Variant BA.2.86 Being Tracked by CDC

November 27, 2023, 1:15 PM EDT

What CDC knows

BA.2.86, a variant of the virus that causes COVID-19 that CDC has been tracking since August, is currently projected to comprise 5-15% of circulating variants. **At this time, the expected public health risk of this variant, including its offshoot JN.1, is low.** The increase of this variant does not affect [CDC's COVID-19 recommendations](#).

What CDC is doing

CDC continues to track new variants, working closely with partners around the world, to provide the latest information. It's a great time to get an updated COVID-19 vaccine if you haven't already had one this fall, since infections are likely to increase in the coming months, as they tend to do this time of year.

Keep reading: [Update on SARS-CoV-2 Variant BA.2.86 Being Tracked by CDC](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake and CDC's Commitment to Vaccine Equity

November 22, 2023, 9:00 AM EDT

What CDC knows

On November 16, CDC posted the [first detailed estimates](#) of who has gotten updated COVID-19 vaccines this fall. The data show that COVID-19 vaccine uptake is lower than we'd like to see and there are disparities in uptake by race and ethnicity. This means a lot of people are missing out on the benefits of vaccination. There are many social, geographic, political, economic, and environmental factors that create challenges to vaccination access and acceptance, and that often affect racial and ethnic minority groups.

What CDC is doing

Respiratory viruses don't affect everyone equally. Certain groups of people are more likely to get very sick or die from COVID-19, and one reason is that there are big disparities in vaccination uptake. CDC is committed to vaccine equity so that everyone has fair and just access to vaccination. CDC [continues to work to address vaccine inequities](#) and their underlying drivers.

Keep reading: [COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake and CDC's Commitment to Vaccine Equity](#)

VAERS: A Critical Part of the National Vaccine Safety System

November 21, 2023, 3:30 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Monitoring vaccine safety is an important responsibility shared by the CDC and the FDA.

What CDC is doing

The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) is an early-warning monitoring system for vaccine safety. It allows patients, pharmaceutical companies, medical personnel and other users to report concerns about medical events that occurred after someone received a vaccination. What VAERS doesn't do, though, is tell us whether a vaccine caused a medical issue. That requires investigation. VAERS has a proven track record of successfully helping to identify safety issues.

Keep reading: [VAERS: A Critical Part of the National Vaccine Safety System](#)

Take Steps to Help You Stay Healthy During the Holidays

November 9, 2023, 2:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Viruses tend to spread more commonly during fall and winter, especially the respiratory viruses that cause flu, COVID-19, and RSV illness. For many, gathering with loved ones to celebrate the holidays during this season is an important tradition. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to help you and your loved ones stay healthy this holiday season.

What CDC is doing

CDC continually monitors respiratory viruses, including what viruses are spreading and where, who they are affecting, and how well vaccines and medications are working against those viruses.

Keep reading: [Take Steps to Help You Stay Healthy During the Holidays](#)

What to Know About Getting Flu, COVID-19, and RSV Vaccines at the Same Time

November 2, 2023, 4:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Some people may prefer to get their recommended flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines at the same time. You should consider getting these vaccines at the same time if making multiple visits to get additional vaccines would be difficult for you.

What CDC is doing

CDC has reviewed the available scientific evidence and concluded that people may get flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines at the same visit.

Keep reading: [What to Know About Getting Flu, COVID-19, and RSV Vaccines at the Same Time](#)

2023-2024 Respiratory Disease Season Outlook – October Update

October 30, 2023, 3:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

[CDC's Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics](#) continues to anticipate that the upcoming fall and winter respiratory disease season will likely result in a similar number of hospitalizations as last season.

What CDC is doing

CDC will continue to monitor respiratory virus activity and update this outlook as we learn more. Vaccination remains the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against serious outcomes of flu, COVID-19, and RSV. [Vaccination](#) is

especially important for people who are at higher risk of developing serious complications.

[Keep reading: 2023-2024 Respiratory Disease Season Outlook – October Update](#)

Variants Happen

October 27, 2023, 4:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

The SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19, is constantly changing and new variants continue to emerge. A variant is a change in the virus. A new variant may infect people more easily, spread faster, or cause people to get sicker. Nevertheless, nearly all the SARS-CoV-2 variants currently circulating in the United States are closely related to the variant used for the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines. This means that the updated vaccines should work well against currently circulating variants and continue to be the best way to protect yourself and others against severe disease.

What CDC is doing

CDC uses multiple systems to understand which SARS-CoV-2 viruses are circulating in communities, where they are circulating, and whether they are likely to contribute to surges in infection or serious illness. CDC then communicates these findings to the public.

[Keep reading: Variants Happen](#)

How to Get Your Flu, COVID-19, and RSV Vaccines This Year

October 19, 2023, 1:30 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Vaccines are an important way to boost your immunity and prevent severe illness from flu, COVID-19, and RSV this fall and winter. These vaccines are only useful if you can access them.

What CDC is doing

There are ways to get free vaccines.

[Keep reading: How to Get Your Flu, COVID-19, and RSV Vaccines This Year](#)

5 Things You Should Know about COVID-19 Vaccines

October 13, 2023, 2:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

COVID-19 vaccines save lives and help keep you out of the hospital. Vaccines are not always effective at preventing infection, but there is extensive data showing that these vaccines prevent severe illness and protect the public's health.

What CDC is doing

CDC is continually assessing how effective COVID-19 vaccines are against this disease. Intensive safety monitoring has been conducted since the first COVID-19 vaccines came out in 2020 and is ongoing.

[Keep reading: Things You Should Know about COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

Immunization Overview for Fall and Winter 2023-2024

September 29, 2023, 6:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Immunizations against COVID-19, flu, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are available and can help protect people against severe illness during the fall and winter season, when these diseases are more common.

What CDC is doing

CDC has provided immunization recommendations for providers and the public and is continuing to communicate about who should get immunizations, the benefits of immunization, and how to find recommended immunizations.

Keep reading: [Immunization Overview for Fall and Winter 2023-2024](#)

Respiratory Virus Vaccination for Pregnant People

September 29, 2023, 1:30 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Pregnant and recently pregnant people are at increased risk of being hospitalized with COVID-19 and flu. Babies are also more likely to get very sick from COVID-19, flu, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

What CDC is doing

CDC recommends COVID-19 and flu vaccination for pregnant people to help protect themselves and their babies from COVID-19 and flu. CDC also recommends RSV vaccination for pregnant people to protect their babies from RSV.

Keep reading: [Respiratory Virus Vaccination for Pregnant People](#)

Update on RSV and New Vaccine Recommendation

September 22, 2023, 5:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) can cause serious illness in infants, young children, and older adults. RSV season is right around the corner and immunization is an important way to protect against severe RSV.

What CDC is doing

Today, CDC recommended an RSV vaccine for people who are 32-36 weeks pregnant to help protect their babies from severe RSV. CDC has also recommended RSV immunization to protect babies and toddlers. For older adults, CDC recommends an RSV vaccine, using shared clinical decision-making.

Keep reading: [Update on RSV and New Vaccine Recommendation](#)

Update on SARS CoV-2 Variant BA.2.86 Being Tracked by CDC

September 15, 2023, 3:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

It is unclear how easily BA.2.86 spreads compared to other circulating variants. At this time, BA.2.86 does not appear to be rapidly increasing or driving increases in infections or hospitalizations in the United States.

What CDC is doing

CDC will continue monitoring BA.2.86 and other circulating variants of the virus that causes COVID-19. Moving forward, we will share updates on BA.2.86 when significant additional information becomes available.

Keep reading: [Sept 15 Update on COVID-19 Variant](#)

2023-2024 Respiratory Disease Season Outlook - Summary

September 14, 2023, 11:30 AM EDT

What CDC knows

Analysis from [CDC's Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics](#) shows that with the addition of a third virus (COVID-19) that can cause severe illness, even an average respiratory season can place significant strain on our healthcare system.

What CDC is doing

CDC recommends staying up to date on the vaccines recommended for you as an important strategy to prevent severe disease and protect yourself and others around you. Higher levels of vaccination across the population will also help reduce the number of hospitalizations and risk of hospital strain.

Keep reading: [Respiratory Disease Season Outlook](#)

Updated COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations are Now Available

September 12, 2023, 9:00 PM EDT

What CDC knows

COVID-19 continues to be a major cause of serious respiratory illnesses in the United States, with more than 200,000 deaths (including more than 600 in children and adolescents 0-19 years old) reported since January 2022. Vaccination is the most effective tool to protect yourself from severe illness this fall and winter.

What CDC is doing

CDC recommended a COVID-19 vaccine updated for 2023-2024 for everyone aged 6 months and older to protect against serious illness.

Keep reading: [Updated COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations Now Available](#)

What We Can Learn from Flu in the Southern Hemisphere

September 8, 2023, 5:30 PM EDT

What CDC knows

The U.S. 2023-2024 flu vaccines have a similar vaccine virus composition as the 2023 Southern Hemisphere flu vaccines.

What CDC is doing

A new CDC study found that people who had received a flu vaccine were half as likely to be hospitalized with flu compared to people who had not been vaccinated.

Keep reading: [Flu in the Southern Hemisphere](#)

Update on SARS CoV-2 Variant BA.2.86 Being Tracked by CDC

September 8, 2023, 11:30 AM EDT

What CDC knows

Early research data from multiple labs are reassuring and show that existing antibodies work against the new BA.2.86 variant.

What CDC is doing

Real-world data are needed to fully understand the impact given the complexities of the immune response to this variant. Studies are ongoing, and we expect to learn more in upcoming weeks.

Keep reading: [Sept 8 Update on COVID-19 Variant](#)

Update on SARS CoV-2 Variant BA.2.86 Being Tracked by CDC

August 30, 2023, 3:30 PM EDT

What CDC knows

At this time, we don't know *how well* this variant spreads, but we know that it spreads *in the same way* as other variants. [Take preventative actions](#) to protect yourself and others from infection.

What CDC is doing

CDC is tracking a new SARS-CoV-2 variant called BA.2.86 and working to better understand its potential impact on public health.

Keep reading: [Update on COVID-19 Variant](#)

New COVID-19 Variant BA.2.86 Being Tracked by CDC

August 23, 2023, 10:10 AM EDT

What CDC knows

A new variant of SARS-CoV-2 called BA.2.86 was detected in Denmark and Israel. This variant is notable because of a large number of genetic differences from previous versions of SARS-CoV-2.

What CDC is doing

Based on what CDC knows now, we've prepared a scientific assessment of the risk profile posed by BA.2.86.

Keep reading: [COVID-19 Variant](#)

Last Reviewed: February 23, 2024