



## Who's dying from COVID-19: Suggested talking points

- **An analysis of California data found that older adults are most likely to die from COVID-19.**
  - The Bay Area News Group [analyzed COVID-19 deaths](#) in California between September 1, 2023, and February 29, 2024, and found that while COVID-19 deaths declined across age groups since 2020, the proportion of COVID-19 deaths in older adults increased.
  - People 65 and older made up nearly 90 percent of COVID-19 deaths in California.
  - While people can die from a COVID-19 infection at any age, respiratory viruses like COVID-19 are particularly dangerous for older adults because [our immune systems weaken as we age](#), and older adults are more likely to have underlying health conditions.
- **Improved vaccination coverage in Latino communities has led to declining deaths.**
  - While Latino individuals made up the largest proportion of COVID-19-related deaths in 2020, the percentage of COVID-19-related Latino deaths decreased and the percentage of white Californians who died from COVID-19 nearly doubled during the analysis period.
  - When COVID-19 vaccines became available, Latino communities were not getting vaccinated as quickly as white communities due to lack of access and insufficient outreach, but this trend has changed. In addition, California's Latino population is younger overall, which reduces the risk of death from COVID-19.
  - [A 2023 KFF poll](#) found that slightly more Black and Hispanic adults reported getting an updated COVID-19 vaccine compared to white adults. (The poll specifically refers to Hispanic adults.) The poll also found white adults were less likely to take precautions against catching and spreading COVID-19.
- **COVID-19 is less deadly now than it was in 2020, but the virus is still dangerous for people across demographics.**
  - A COVID-19 infection can cause severe illness, [heart problems](#), and death. [Nearly one in 10 U.S. adults](#) who contracted COVID-19 are suffering from long COVID.
  - Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccines reduces the risk of complications. Wearing a high-quality, well-fitting mask around others also [reduces the risk](#) of contracting the virus.
  - The CDC recommends people 65 and older [receive an additional dose](#) of the updated COVID-19 vaccine this spring—if at least four months have passed since their last dose. People who are immunocompromised may receive an additional dose of the updated vaccine at least two months after their last dose.



## Who's dying from COVID-19: Frequently asked questions

### 1. Which communities face the greatest risk of death from COVID-19?

Marginalized populations [are at greater risk of death from COVID-19](#) due to systemic health inequities. Older adults are also [more likely to die from COVID-19](#) because our immune systems weaken as we age, and older adults are more likely to have underlying health conditions.

Compared to people between the ages of 18 and 39, people 75 and older were about nine times as likely to die from COVID-19 in 2021, but that margin has continually widened over time.

### 2. How can I reduce my risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19?

[Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccines](#) prevents severe illness, hospitalization, [long COVID](#), and death.

The CDC recommends that people ages 65 and older [receive an additional dose](#) of the updated COVID-19 vaccine this spring—if at least four months have passed since their last dose. People who are immunocompromised may receive an additional dose of the updated vaccine at least two months after their last dose.

Incorporating additional mitigation methods like masking and improving indoor air quality also reduces your risk of contracting the virus.

### 3. How can I protect those who are more vulnerable to severe illness and death from COVID-19?

[Wearing a high-quality, well-fitting mask](#) reduces your risk of contracting COVID-19 and spreading it to others.

At indoor gatherings, improving ventilation by opening doors and windows, using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, and [building your own Corsi-Rosenthal box](#) can also reduce the spread of COVID-19.