



How to stay safe during this summer's COVID-19 wave: Suggested talking points

- **[COVID-19 infections](#) and [hospitalizations are on the rise](#) across the country.**

 - Two subvariants—KP.2 and KP.3, from the family known as FLiRT—are driving the surge, accounting for more than half of all new COVID-19 infections in the U.S.
 - The U.S. often experiences a spike in cases in the summer, but [wastewater data suggests](#) that this summer's COVID-19 wave started weeks earlier than last summer's wave.
 - According to the CDC, COVID-19 infections don't follow a seasonal pattern like RSV and the flu, which primarily circulate during the fall and winter.

- **Since COVID-19 [poses a risk year round](#), taking precautions to protect yourself and those around you is critical.**
 - Wear a high-quality, well-fitting mask to [dramatically reduce your risk](#) of inhaling respiratory virus particles and of [spreading viral particles to others](#).
 - If you're experiencing symptoms—including a sore throat, cough, runny nose, fever, nausea, diarrhea, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell—stay home and away from others. [Seek medical attention](#) if your symptoms are severe or if you have risk factors for severe illness.
 - To test for COVID-19, [take an at-home rapid antigen test](#). If the test is negative, take another test 48 hours later. One negative rapid test is not enough to confirm that you're COVID-free.
 - If you don't have symptoms—but you know you were exposed or are testing before a gathering—take three at-home rapid antigen tests 48 hours apart to improve the odds of getting an accurate reading. For a more accurate diagnosis, you can also get a [PCR, or molecular, test](#) from a health care provider or purchase one for self-testing at home.
 - If you're hosting a gathering, opt to stay outside or take steps to [improve indoor ventilation](#) by opening windows and doors and using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. You can also [build your own Corsi-Rosenthal box](#), which can capture about 85 percent of infectious particles.
- **New COVID-19 vaccines will be available this fall, likely in September.**
 - The updated vaccines will target the more recently circulating subvariants and will become available in August or September.
 - The updated COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna will target KP.2, the currently circulating subvariant that descends from JN.1. The updated COVID-19 vaccine from Novavax will target the JN.1 subvariant that was dominant earlier this year.



- If you get the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine that's still available and are 65 or older, wait four months before getting the updated COVID-19 vaccine this fall.
- **Talk to your health care provider about whether you should get another COVID-19 vaccine now or wait until the new vaccines are released this fall.**
 - [Dr. Peter Hotez](#) of the Baylor College of Medicine says, "If you've not been at all vaccinated with the [vaccine] from the fall of 2023, you do have some risk with this current surge and might give serious thought to getting the currently available vaccine, especially if you are traveling or have underlying risk factors."
 - If you have not yet received last year's updated COVID-19 vaccine, or if you are 65 or older or [immunocompromised](#), you can still [get it now](#) before more updated COVID-19 vaccines become available in the fall.



How to stay safe during this summer's COVID-19 wave: Frequently asked questions

1. How can I protect myself during the current COVID-19 surge?

Wear a high-quality, well-fitting mask to [dramatically reduce your risk](#) of inhaling respiratory virus particles and [spreading viral particles to others](#).

If you're hosting a gathering, opt to stay outside or take steps to [improve indoor ventilation](#) by opening windows and doors and using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. You can also [build your own Corsi-Rosenthal box](#), which can capture about 85 percent of infectious particles.

Ensure that you're up to date on COVID-19 vaccines to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, long COVID, and death.

2. When will this year's updated COVID-19 vaccines become available?

Updated COVID-19 vaccines targeting more recently circulating subvariants will likely become available in August or September and are recommended for everyone 6 months and older.

The updated COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna will target KP.2—a currently circulating subvariant—and the updated Novavax vaccine will target JN.1, which was dominant earlier in the year.

3. I still haven't received last year's updated COVID-19 vaccine—should I get it now?

If you have not yet received last year's updated COVID-19 vaccine, or if you are 65 or older or [immunocompromised](#), you can [get it now](#) before updated COVID-19 vaccines become available in the fall. Talk to your health care provider about the best course of action for you.

[Dr. Peter Hotez](#) of the Baylor College of Medicine says, "If you've not been at all vaccinated with the [vaccine] from the fall of 2023, you do have some risk with this current surge and might give serious thought to getting the currently available vaccine, especially if you are traveling or have underlying risk factors."

If you're 65 and over and recently got last year's COVID-19 vaccine, or if you're planning to get it in the near future, you'll [need to wait four months](#) before getting the 2024-2025 updated COVID-19 vaccine in the fall.