

Eight Reasons to get the Up-To-Date Covid-19 Booster Before the Holidays

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Dr. Mark Mulligan receiving the COVID-19 vaccine (NYU Langone)

As a vaccine expert, I am strongly recommending that everyone get the updated Covid-19 booster shot before the holidays. Do you use a computer at your home or work? Do you protect your machine against computer viruses with anti-virus software? And do you periodically receive notice that the anti-virus software needs to be updated? And do you agree to the updated protection – or allow it to update automatically? I do, to protect my machine with the best available software against ever-changing computer virus threats. And by

protecting my computer I also protect the network of family, friends and colleagues with whom I exchange files and photos every day.

According to the US CDC, only 12% of Americans aged 5 and up have updated their bodies' anti-virus protection this fall by receiving a Covid-19 booster vaccine. To me, this is concerning with Thanksgiving upon us and the year-end holidays rapidly approaching. There is good news: the updated vaccine is widely available, **free**, well-tolerated, and safe.

Below I list eight reasons, and links to some of the new supporting data, for why I strongly recommend that you stay up-to-date with your protection against Covid-19 by receiving the booster vaccine.

Yes, if you are boosted and you later are exposed to the virus you may still acquire infection and may experience mild-to-moderate Covid-19 disease. The dominant circulating variants, BQ.1 and cousins, appear more likely to evade vaccine protection and may cause a new surge of infections in both boosted and un-boosted people this winter. However, your updated booster will strengthen immunity and, based on all we know from prior boosters, will bolster protection against serious disease.

My family is up-to-date on all recommended Covid-19 vaccinations, including my 3 grandchildren. My 90-year-old mother got the updated booster and a few weeks later she was exposed to the virus and developed Covid-19. She took paxlovid and experienced only mild-to-moderate symptoms. I feel strongly that the updated booster she received, along with paxlovid, helped her to do well with her infection, even at age 90.

We can receive the updated Covid-19 booster and the annual flu shot at the same time, one in each arm. It's easy, safe and efficient - I did it! Both flu and RSV are off to an early start this year, so please also update your body's anti-virus protection against flu with the flu shot. Unfortunately, RSV vaccines are not available, although they are being developed.

There is also now a new booster option, the NovaVax protein + adjuvant Covid-19 vaccine for people 18 years and over who previously had a primary vaccination series but aren't yet boosted and cannot or will not receive an mRNA vaccine booster.

About a third of Americans haven't received any Covid-19 vaccine dose to date. **Unvaccinated people with Covid-19 are 8-times more likely to die than vaccinated people.** This is a dangerous virus that has killed over a million Americans. On the other hand, Covid-19 vaccines have saved tens of millions of lives.

Covid-19 is not through with us. Let us not prematurely declare either victory or defeat. More waning and more variants will occur. Hopefully, improved next-generation Covid-19 vaccines with more staying power will become available. Stay tuned!

Eight Reasons To Get The Up-to-Date COVID-19 Booster For the Holidays

1. The pandemic is [not over](#).
2. [New versions](#) of the virus (variants) became dominant in November.
3. Protection provided by previous vaccines and boosters [waned over time](#).
4. The updated booster [is safe](#).
5. The updated booster [increases antibodies](#) against recent variants.
6. The updated booster is [effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19](#).
7. Vaccines [protect against long Covid](#).
8. Protecting yourself will also [protect neighbors](#) with weak immunity.

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