

New COVID-19 vaccine approved by FDA (Broadcast)

INTRO:

THE FALL VIRUS SEASON IS UPON US – AND THE F-D-A JUST APPROVED ONE OF THE NEWEST TOOLS TO PROTECT AMERICANS FROM SEVERE ILLNESS.

TAKE VO

THE UPDATED COVID-19 VACCINE IS EXPECTED TO BE AVAILABLE AT PHARMACIES AROUND THE COUNTRY IN THE COMING WEEKS. THE M-R-N-A VACCINE IS NOT A BOOSTER – SAYS DR. DOUG KASPER – AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE SPECIALIST WITH OSF HEALTHCARE. HE SAYS IT'S RECOMMENDED FOR A MUCH BROADER PORTION OF THE POPULATION... EVERYONE SIX MONTHS AND OLDER... AS A ONE-TIME... ONCE A YEAR VACCINE. THIS VACCINE DOES NOT PREVENT YOU FROM GETTING COVID – BUT IT'S GOAL IS TO PREVENT SEVERE ILLNESS FROM THE VIRUS. DR. KASPER SAYS IT'S TOTALLY FINE TO GET THE COVID-19 AND FLU VACCINES IN THE SAME APPOINTMENT.

TAKE SOT | DR. DOUG KASPER | INFECTIOUS DISEASE SPECIALIST | OSF HEALTHCARE

"There's no issue with timing on getting the COVID and influenza vaccines. The RSV vaccine is recommended to be given separate," Dr. Kasper says. "Most of that has to do with the fact they weren't studied together, there's not an adverse issue with it. For the population, COVID and influenza are recommended across almost all age groups. RSV is for our older population, so we recommend spacing that out by a week or two."

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DR. KASPER SAYS FOR THOSE 65 AND OLDER WITH RESPIRATORY CONDITIONS – IT MIGHT BE RECOMMENDED THEY RECEIVE A SECOND BOOSTER IN SIX-MONTH INCREMENTS. HE SAYS THE BEST BET TO GET A VACCINE IS SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT AT LOCAL COMMERCIAL RETAILERS LIKE TARGET... WALGREENS... C-V-S OR WALMART.

ADDITIONAL INFO/SOUNDBITES:

"The U.S. government will make the at-home COVID testing available for free again this year. You can request up to four home tests that will be delivered to your address for free," Dr. Kasper says. That gives people another option for testing if they think they're developing signs of COVID even after receiving a vaccine, which can be another way to avoid wait lines at urgent cares, ERs or primary care clinics, and to keep themselves isolated until symptoms have resolved."

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services reports that [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov) will be the website to order from once the website is active.

Status of the Novavax vaccine

A third manufacturer, Novavax, makes a protein-based vaccine similar to influenza vaccines. While it hasn't been approved by the FDA, Dr. Kasper suspects it will be soon.

"It likely will be approved, and Novavax has been a prior manufacturer of COVID-19 vaccines. That is a third option that will be coming that isn't mRNA based for people to consider if they had an adverse reaction with Pfizer or Moderna in the past," Dr. Kasper says.

The 2024-2025 formula has been updated to protect against the Omicron variant KP.2. The FDA has the following "What to Know" sheet for the different age groups.

- Unvaccinated individuals 6 months through 4 years of age are eligible to receive three doses of the updated, authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or two doses of the updated, authorized Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.
- Individuals 6 months through 4 years of age who have previously been vaccinated against COVID-19 are eligible to receive one or two doses of the updated, authorized Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines (timing and number of doses to administer depends on the previous COVID-19 vaccine received).
- Individuals 5 years through 11 years of age regardless of previous vaccination are eligible to receive a single dose of the updated, authorized Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines; if previously vaccinated, the dose is administered at least two months after the last dose of any COVID-19 vaccine.
- Individuals 12 years of age and older are eligible to receive a single dose of the updated, approved Comirnaty (manufactured by Pfizer BioNTech) or the updated, approved Spikevax (manufactured by Moderna); if previously vaccinated, the dose is administered at least two months since the last dose of any COVID-19 vaccine.
- Additional doses are authorized for certain immunocompromised individuals ages 6 months through 11 years of age as described in the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine fact sheets.