

New COVID variant spreading fast in the U.S. (Article)

- New variant, “JN.1 is now the fastest-growing variant in the U.S., according to the [CDC]” and “...currently accounts for more than one-fifth of all infections in the U.S....”
- The HV.1 subvariant is still the dominant strain nationally, accounting for 30% of COVID cases during a two-week period ending on Dec.9. The JN.1 variant is the second most prevalent, accounting for 21 % of cases.
- “All of the most prevalent COVID-19 variants in the U.S. right now are descendants of Omicron, which began circulating in late 2021”
- Symptoms of JN.1 are similar to those caused by other COVID strains.
- “...there is no evidence that JN.1 presents an increased risk to public health relative to other currently circulating strains.” (CDC)
- “All COVID-19 diagnostic tests—including rapid antigen tests and PCR tests—are expected to be effective at detecting JN.1, as well as other variants, according to the CDC.”
- Updated COVID vaccines are expected to increase protection against JN.1 as well as other variants according to the CDC.

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 (CDC)

In addition to basic health and hygiene practices, like handwashing, CDC recommends some prevention actions at all COVID-19 hospital admission levels, which include:

- [Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [Improving Ventilation](#)
- [Getting Tested for COVID-19 If Needed](#)
- [Following Recommendations for What to Do If You Have Been Exposed](#)
- [Staying Home If You Have Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)
- [Seeking Treatment If You Have COVID-19 and Are at High Risk of Getting Very Sick](#)
- [Avoiding Contact with People Who Have Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Update:

CDC recommends the 2023–2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. CDC recommends the 2023–2024 updated COVID-19 vaccines: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or Novavax, to protect against serious illness from COVID-19. None of the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines is preferred over another. People who are [moderately or severely immunocompromised](#) may get additional doses of updated COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your healthcare provider about [additional updated doses](#).

- [Children aged 6 months–4 years](#) will need to get all recommended doses, including at least 1 dose of updated COVID-19 vaccine.
- [Everyone aged 5 years and older](#) should get 1 dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against serious illness from COVID-19.

For more information on what it means to be “up to date” with your COVID-19 Vaccine series please click [here](#).

People can get their updated vaccine as long as it’s been at least eight weeks after receiving the most recent dose of any COVID-19 vaccine. People who have recently recovered from a COVID-19 infection can wait 90 days before getting the updated vaccine. It will take about 2 weeks for the updated vaccine to provide maximum protection after someone receives it. Updated vaccines should work well against currently circulating variants and continue to be the best way to protect yourself against severe disease.

The vaccines are covered by insurance, including private insurance, Medicare plans, and Medicaid plans. Uninsured children and uninsured adults also have access through the Vaccine for Children Program and Bridge Access Program, respectively.

In Oregon, we have had a marked increase in people testing positive for COVID-19 in recent weeks, so remember:

1. Know Your Risk
2. Think about how you'll protect yourself and others around you
3. Get tested if you have symptoms
4. If you test positive, contact your health care provider for treatment.

COVID-19 Vaccination Locations

Updated COVID-19 Vaccines are available at most places you would normally go to get your vaccines.

Please check [vaccines.gov](#) for a list of locations where the updated COVID-19 Vaccine is available. While certain pharmacies and locations are listed as having the updated vaccine available, it is best to check for appointment availability on the providers’ site directly.

Below is a list of some of the locations where people can get their updated 2023-2024 COVID Vaccine. Vaccine availability for different age groups varies by location.

[walgreens.com](#)

[CVS.com](#)

[riteaid.com](#)

[safeway.com](#)

[albertons.com](#)

Other options to find a COVID-19 Vaccine location near you:

- Text your zip code to 438829
- Call 1-800-232-0233

No-Cost COVID-19 Testing Options

[Walgreens:](#)

Offers COVID-19 testing for both insured and uninsured patients. Providing insurance does not guarantee coverage. **To see if no-cost COVID testing is available near you** and to schedule a test click here [COVID-19 Testing | Select Location | Walgreens](#). Testing options are available at no-cost for those without insurance **at select locations.**

Quest Diagnostics:

Patients without insurance who are symptomatic or exposed are eligible for \$0 out-of-pocket COVID-19 testing at select Quest locations. Please click [here](#) to see if there are no-cost testing locations near you.

Update: Insured patients (including those with Medicaid and Medicare) no longer qualify for government-sponsored testing. Testing coverage will be determined by your insurance provider. If you want to be tested for COVID-19, please contact your physician for options.

Free Home COVID-19 Tests

U.S. household can again place an order to receive four more free COVID-19 rapid home tests delivered directly to their home. These tests are intended to be for use through the end of 2023 and will include instructions on how to verify extended expiration dates. You can place your order by clicking here: [COVID.gov - Free at-home COVID-19 tests](#). Before you throw out "expired" tests click here to [Check to see if your COVID-19 tests' expiration dates have been extended](#).

In-Home COVID-19 Vaccinations: Lane County Public Health is no longer able to offer in-home COVID-19 vaccinations.