

Health Alert

Living Longer? Great! Now Stay Healthier, Too

(NAPS)—Americans are living nearly a decade longer than they were in the 1970s. That's great news—but staying healthy into your 80s and beyond requires extra care and an eye towards prevention. The protection provided by vaccines plays a key role in helping keep you healthy and preventing severe illness and potential long-term complications, especially for older adults and individuals with immunocompromised conditions.

As people age, their immune system naturally weakens—it becomes slower at recognizing and fighting off viruses. At the same time, lungs become more vulnerable, and chronic conditions such as heart disease or diabetes can make it harder to recover from illnesses such as COVID-19. Similarly, people of all ages with weakened immune systems—whether from certain health conditions or medications—face a higher risk of severe illness because their bodies also struggle to mount a strong defense. In both cases, a reduced ability to fight infectious respiratory disease increases the risk of serious complications and hospitalization.

Vaccines Help Keep You Healthy

That's why staying up to date on vaccines—especially for COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory illnesses like flu, measles, pertussis, pneumococcal disease, and RSV—is essential as we head into spring and summer. Vaccination helps boost our body's immune response and provides an added layer of protection when traveling and gathering with friends and family. In fact, according to data from the 2024/2025 season, COVID-19 vaccination was associated with:

- A 45% lower risk of hospitalization from COVID-19 for older adults
- A 40% lower risk of hospitalization from COVID-19 for older adults with weakened immune systems
- A 33% lower risk of emergency department or urgent care visits from COVID-19 among adults 18 and older



An additional dose of the 2024/2025 COVID-19 vaccine six months after the first dose adds a key layer of protection against severe illness for older Americans and people with weakened immune systems.

Why It Matters Now

COVID-19 isn't just a seasonal concern—it can surge at any time of the year, including during the spring and summer. Early in the pandemic, spikes were often associated with colder months, but we now know that outbreaks can occur during any season because the virus keeps changing so it can spread more easily from person to person. This makes staying up to date on vaccination even more important.

Spring into Summer with an Extra Layer of Protection

Immunity from previous doses can wane over time, leaving individuals—especially those 65 and older or with a weakened immune system—more vulnerable to severe illness. If you fall into one of these groups, it's recommended that you receive another dose of the 2024/2025 COVID-19 vaccine six months after your first dose to help maintain protection.

Talk to your healthcare provider to learn whether you should get another dose of the latest COVID-19 vaccine so you can enjoy time with family, travel, and everything else this season brings.

Learn more at: [CVEEP.org/stayprotected](https://cveep.org/stayprotected).