

Supply may soon outstrip demand in U.S. vaccine rollout: report

April 21 2021, by Ernie Mundell



Since the first COVID-19 vaccine was approved in December, millions

of Americans have eagerly sought to find and receive one. But a new report finds that that could change over the next few weeks, as the pool of eager recipients shrinks and only the vaccine-hesitant remain.

"While timing may differ by state, we estimate that across the U.S. as a whole we will likely reach a tipping point on [vaccine](#) enthusiasm in the next two to four weeks," researchers from the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) explained in a report released April 20.

"Once this happens, efforts to encourage vaccination will become much harder, presenting a challenge to reaching the levels of herd immunity that are expected to be needed," concluded KFF researchers Jennifer Kates, Larry Levitt and Josh Michaud.

According to Kaiser's own polling data, the percentage of American adults who have either received one COVID-19 vaccine dose or want to get vaccinated as soon as they can has steadily risen—from 55% in late February to 61% expressing "vaccine enthusiasm" by March 21.

"If we use 61% as a current 'outer edge' of vaccine enthusiasm, it translates into about 157 million adults," the authors of the report said. With the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announcing Monday that more than half the adult population—131 million people—have already received at least one dose of vaccine, "that leaves an additional 27 million adults to go before we hit up against the 'enthusiasm limit,'" the team said.

At current rates of vaccination, those last "enthusiastic" vaccine-seekers will have gotten their shots "in about 15 days," the authors noted, and "of course if the pace of vaccination picks up, it could be sooner."

There is the possibility that enthusiasm in the vaccine increases again, to say, 66%, and in that case the "tipping point" where supply exceeds

demand could be reached in three to four weeks from now, according to the Kaiser report.

But once that tipping point hits, finding willing arms to receive vaccines gets a lot harder.

"It will take a concerted effort to reach a sufficient level of vaccination for herd immunity," the researchers added. "Federal, state and local officials, and the private sector, will face the challenge of having to figure out how to increase willingness to get vaccinated among those still on the fence, and ideally among the one-fifth of adults who have consistently said they would not get vaccinated or would do so only if required."

Speaking with *CNN* on Tuesday, Dr. Rob Davidson, an emergency room physician in Spring Lake, Mich., said that local officials are becoming worried already. "We have slots going unfilled, I know in West Michigan and other parts, particularly in rural Michigan," he said.

And Kristy Fryman, the emergency response coordinator and public information officer for the Mercer County Health District in Ohio, told *CNN* she's seeing a slowdown in vaccination appointments as well.

"We've been going back to the drawing board trying to figure out how to get more people vaccinated but ... we can only do so much," she said.

Other polls suggest acceptance of the vaccines may still be on the rise, however. According to an *Associated Press*-NORC Center for Public Affairs poll conducted in January, 67% of Americans said they'd be willing to get a COVID-19 vaccine, but that number had risen to 75% in the latest AP-NORC poll.

All Americans over 16 eligible

As of Monday, every American aged 16 or older in all 50 states is now open to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, meeting President Joe Biden's promise to deliver vaccines to all adults by April 19.

"If you're 16 or over, it is your turn to get vaccinated, no matter where you live," Andy Slavitt, White House senior adviser for COVID-19 response, said during a briefing Monday, *CBS News* reported.

Although Biden set the April 19 deadline earlier this month, most states had already expanded access to over-16s earlier than that. And the nation is close to meeting Biden's goal of 200 million shots in arms by his 100th day in office.

Half of all Americans aged 18 or older have now gotten at least one shot in the arm of a COVID-19 vaccine, the CDC announced Sunday.

The agency said that almost 130 million people—50.4% of the U.S. adult population—have received at least one dose of vaccine, while almost 84 million adults, or nearly a third (32.5%), are fully vaccinated.

For many, the protection that comes with immunization has meant a relaxation of rules and precautions that have separated loved ones for more than a year.

"It's a little emotional. I haven't been able to see my grandmother in a year and a half almost," Alabama resident Amanda Grimsley, 35, told the *AP*. "And that's the longest my entire family has ever gone without seeing her. And we'll be seeing her in mid-May now."

Where can you find information on accessing your shot? States are setting up their own vaccine-finder websites, and big chains such as Walmart, Walgreens and CVS are helping to administer them. The CDC also has a vaccine locator website at [VaccineFinder.org](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinefinder/).

In the United States, efforts to vaccinate are now beginning to shift from getting shots into the arms of those who were eager for immunization, to trying to convince the many who are still hesitant.

Politics and geography remain key factors in vaccine acceptance. According to a poll conducted in late March by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs, 36% of Republicans said they will probably or definitely not get vaccinated, versus 12% of Democrats.

And while less than one-quarter of people living in cities say they are hesitant about getting a shot, that number rises to one-third of Americans living in rural areas, polling found.

However, race seems to be playing less of a role: In January, an AP-NORC poll found 41% of Black Americans, 34% of Hispanic Americans and 31% of white Americans saying they would probably or definitely not get vaccinated. But the latest poll found those numbers had fallen to 24%, 22% and 26%, respectively.

Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccine in limbo after clotting reports

In the meantime, the fate of Johnson & Johnson's [coronavirus](#) vaccine hangs in the balance after a government advisory committee said it needed more time and evidence to determine whether unusual, but severe, [blood clots](#) seen in a handful of people were caused by the vaccine.

So far, only six clotting cases have been officially reported out of more than 7 million shots given of the one-dose vaccine. But last week, U.S. health officials recommended a pause in J&J vaccinations.

Last Wednesday, advisers to the CDC held an emergency meeting to look at the evidence and decided they did not have enough information

or time to recommend how to proceed, the *AP* reported. A second emergency hearing has been scheduled for this week.

Speaking with CBS' *Face the Nation* on Sunday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said he expects the CDC panel to issue a decision on whether to resume using the J&J shot by Friday.

But some vaccine specialists who watched the deliberations said the public shouldn't have to wait for more advice.

The CDC advisors stressed they need to proceed carefully.

"I continue to feel like we're in a race against time and the variants, but we need to [move forward] in the safest possible way," said CDC adviser Dr. Grace Lee, of Stanford University, who was among those seeking to postpone a vote on the vaccine, the *AP* reported.

Authorities have studied the clots for only a few days and have little information to judge the shot, said fellow CDC adviser Dr. Beth Bell, from the University of Washington, the *AP* reported.

"I don't want to send the message [that] there is something fundamentally wrong with this vaccine," Bell said. "It's a very rare event. Nothing in life is risk-free. But I want to be able to understand and defend the decision I've made based on a reasonable amount of data."

One of the most worrying things about the clots is that they are atypical and require different treatment. They occur in unusual places, such as in veins that drain blood from the brain, and in people with abnormally low levels of clot-forming platelets, the *AP* reported. The six cases raised an alarm bell because that number is at least three times more than experts would have expected to see of more typical clots, said the CDC's Dr.

Tom Shimabukuro.

"What we have here is a picture of clots forming in large vessels where we have low platelets," Shimabukuro explained to the *AP*. "This usually doesn't happen," but it is eerily similar to European reports of clotting with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The J&J clotting cases in the United States were all among women younger than 50. In Europe, most but not all cases following AstraZeneca vaccinations have been among women under 60, leading different countries to deploy that vaccine in more limited ways.

The U.S. coronavirus case count neared 32 million on Wednesday, while the death toll topped 568,000, according to a tally from Johns Hopkins University. Worldwide, more than 143 million cases had been reported by Wednesday, with over 3 million people dead from COVID-19.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [new coronavirus](#).

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