

Vaccines' power against COVID hospitalization fades in elderly

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(HealthDay)—The ability of COVID-19 vaccines to protect adults older

than 75 against hospitalization appears to wane over time, but still remained 80% effective as of the end of July, new federal data shows.

The same data indicates that vaccines continued to offer the same or nearly the same level of protection against hospitalization for people up to the age of 75, and the shots remained 94% effective among adults ages 18-49, *CBS News* reported.

Hospitalization rates among fully vaccinated people were higher among [older residents](#) of nursing homes and among those with underlying conditions such as weakened immune systems, according to data compiled by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Getting vaccinated remains crucial: Previewing the data's release earlier this month, CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky noted that "COVID-19-associated hospitalization rates were 17 times higher in unvaccinated," *CBS News* reported.

The fresh data was presented Monday as the CDC's independent panel of vaccine experts met to discuss federal plans for a potential booster dose of COVID-19 vaccines next month.

While the findings suggest a slight decline in the vaccines' ability to protect older and [vulnerable people](#) against severe disease, the CDC says reaching conclusions about how long protection lasts in these groups is challenging, *CBS News* reported.

"It actually may be very difficult for us to disentangle time, since vaccination and the impact of the Delta variant, especially in some populations that we know were vaccinated earlier in the time course. So, if we see waning in the last couple of months, it could be really difficult," Dr. Sara Oliver, a leading CDC vaccine official, told the vaccine panel.

Another CDC analysis released on the weekend stated that even though 16.1% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients in June had been fully vaccinated, the vaccines appear to remain "highly effective in preventing hospitalization," *CBS News* reported.

On Monday, the CDC said it will schedule another meeting of the panel in mid-September to discuss more data on booster shots, a meeting that will likely be held before the Biden administration's planned roll-out of booster shots the week of Sept. 20.

Previously, top U.S. health officials said they were planning for the possibility that third doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines would be needed eight months after people received their first two shots, but recent data from the [vaccine](#) makers and other countries suggest booster shots might be required sooner than six months from vaccination, *CBS News* reported.

More information: Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for more on [COVID vaccines](#).

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