

# COVID fatigue: Are you among the "vaxxed & done"?

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(HealthDay)—You've gotten vaccinated. You've gotten boosted. You

wear your mask, maintain social distancing, wash your hands—you do everything you've been asked to do to protect yourself and others.

And you are completely fed up.

If that description sounds like you, you might be part of a contingent of [people](#) who consider themselves "vaxxed and done" with the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

The term was coined by *Atlantic* writer Derek Thompson, in an essay describing a growing rift among the people who've taken COVID seriously throughout the pandemic.

The "vaxxed and done" bunch are willing to keep getting boosted, but they want to reap the rewards of their good behavior rather than maintain masking and other measures that largely protect the unvaccinated, Thompson [wrote](#).

"COVID is becoming something like the seasonal flu for most people who keep up with their shots, so I'm prepared to treat this like I've treated the flu: by basically not worrying about it and living my life normally," Thompson wrote in describing the "vaxxed and done" mindset.

Public health and mental health officials agree that "vaxxed and done" is a real phenomenon, in that some vaccinated Americans are becoming exasperated with COVID-19 safety mandates that many fear will never lift.

"There's certainly a level of frustration I think that people have at individuals who have made choices to not get vaccinated, and how that has continued to extend the crisis," said Vaile Wright, a licensed psychologist and senior director of health care innovation for the

American Psychological Association.

"But I think people are also frustrated with the system, and the way in which the system has truly let down individuals who have for the most part tried to do the best that they can to keep themselves and others safe," Wright added.

### **Pandemic fatigue setting in**

The way that the COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded feeds directly into the feeling of "vaxxed and done," explained Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

"It's very, very difficult to keep people constrained on an emergency basis, no matter what you do," Benjamin said. "We've had at least three situations where we thought this thing was going to go away."

Americans have emerged from lockdowns related to one variant, only to be told to mask up for the next. They've gotten fully vaccinated so they could resume normal lives, only to be told that they needed to maintain safety measures to protect the unvaccinated and the medically vulnerable. They've gotten boosted due to waning immunity, only to find that Omicron is so infectious they'll probably get it anyway.

"We're rapidly approaching the three-year mark of this pandemic, and people's lives have changed so much in that time," said Dr. Vivian Pender, president of the American Psychiatric Association.

"There's this kind of new normal, but the new normal keeps changing. Just when it started to feel like things were going to go back to the way it used to be, along comes [Omicron](#)," Pender said.

Benjamin added that "people are just tired of it. They're all trying to

figure out what personally they're going to do. I think most people have reconciled that I'm not going to get really sick and die, but I may get the Omicron variant, and I'm hoping if I get the Omicron variant I won't get real sick. I think there's a resignation that, OK, if that happens, fine. I'll still do stuff to be careful, but if it happens I'm not going to panic over it."

Wright doesn't believe people feeling "vaxxed and done" have abandoned safety procedures and masking wholesale, but it has led them to seriously re-evaluate how they're going to spend the rest of their lives with a virus that shows no signs of ever going away.

The problem is that drawing a hard line and declaring yourself "vaxxed and done" carries similar psychological costs to those paid by the unvaccinated, Wright said.

"To the degree that people can be flexible in their thinking and acknowledge that uncertainty will continue and you're just trying to make the best decisions for you and your family, and focusing on what's within your control, I think that will lend itself to better emotional well-being," Wright said.

"For individuals who want to continue to fight the situation by either not complying with protective measures or engaging in what I see as a lot of judgment against others as to how they're doing, I think those individuals are going to continue to really struggle," Wright continued.

### **Preparing for the next 'new normal'**

Thoughtful and responsible people who've reached their "vaxxed and done" limit should consider that wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing will help health care workers who are being slammed by the Omicron surge, Pender said.

Hospitals in at least two dozen states are nearing capacity as the Omicron variant washes across America, according to the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#).

"It's important to bring down the hospitalization rates. The hospitals are overwhelmed, and regular health care is taking a hit," Pender said, because people aren't able to get care for non-COVID emergencies due to the rush of Omicron hospitalizations.

Masking also helps protect people who are at increased risk through no fault of their own, Pender added.

"There are people in our lives who are vulnerable from COVID. Even people who have been vaccinated and boosted may have an underlying condition that they don't know about," Pender said.

"Crystal ball" predictions based on the outbreaks in South Africa and Britain lead Benjamin to believe that within a month or so the Omicron surge will start to wane, and state officials will face the choice of lifting mask mandates and other safety measures.

Now is the time to start planning for how to deal with the understandable frustrations of the "vaxxed and done" once this pandemic enters yet another new normal, Benjamin said.

"As a society, we now need to figure out how we live with this post-Omicron," Benjamin said. "We still need to deal with this. It's still bad. It's still clogging up our hospitals. But we need to figure out where we go from this, when this thing nadirs."

**More information:** The Mayo Clinic has more about the mental health effects of the [pandemic](#).

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