

COVID boosters could save 90,000 lives this winter. Will Americans get them?

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How many Americans will die of COVID-19 this winter could depend

on how many get their booster shots, a new report shows.

Up to 90,000 U.S. COVID deaths could be prevented through the fall and winter, but that is less likely if vaccine uptake continues at the current slow pace, the Commonwealth Fund [study](#) released Wednesday predicted. Death rates could peak at more than 1,000 per day during the winter if nothing changes.

"When you look at the data of the deaths and [severe disease](#) among unvaccinated versus vaccinated and boosted, versus vaccinated and doubly boosted, the data are crystal clear of the difference in severity and [death](#) among people who are not vaccinated," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Fauci was speaking at a [webinar](#) hosted by the University of Southern California's Center for Health Journalism on Tuesday.

"In this rich country of ours, we have 68% of the population is vaccinated and only one half of those have received one [booster](#)," Fauci said. "We rank very poorly in our acceptance of vaccines. Somehow we've got to get down to the root cause of that, and I know it's going to be very complicated because a lot of it is because of political divisiveness."

About 7.6 million Americans have received an updated booster dose so far, according to the [latest data](#) from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The updated shots, made by both Moderna and Pfizer, were [authorized](#) in late August by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The researchers determined that if COVID booster vaccinations happened at a rate similar to flu vaccinations in 2020-21, there would be

75,000 fewer deaths, 745,000 fewer hospitalizations and \$44 billion less spent in [medical costs](#) from Oct. 1 to the end of March 2023, compared with a scenario in which daily vaccination rates were unchanged.

In another scenario, analysts determined that if 80% of people received their updated booster doses, it would prevent not only 90,000 deaths but more than 936,000 hospitalizations and save \$56 billion in six months.

At the current pace of booster shot uptake, if there is a [winter](#) virus surge, that could bring a peak of 16,000 hospitalizations and 1,200 deaths per day by March.

Right now, there is an average of more than 400 COVID deaths daily in the United States, *CNN* reported.

Only about two-thirds of the U.S. population is fully vaccinated with an initial series. About half of those, or 33.3% have received a booster dose, according to the CDC. Americans may need to get an updated COVID vaccination each year.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [COVID-19 vaccines](#).

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