

# Study shows breakthrough COVID was rare among vaccinated seniors

April 3 2023

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A new study published in the *Journal of American Medical Directors (JAMDA)* found that the risk of severe COVID-19 illness among nursing home residents with complete vaccination are low. The study found that residents aged 85 and older with certain comorbidities like heart disease and kidney disease were more vulnerable but that the risk of breakthrough COVID among fully vaccinated residents was less than

10%.

Examining data of 23,172 fully vaccinated residents from 984 nursing homes from March through November 2021, the study, entitled "Resident Factors Associated with Breakthrough SARS-COV-2 Infections," found that just 5% developed an incident of breakthrough infection (BTI) of COVID-19 irrespective of variant during the time frame.

The study also found that less than 10% of vaccinated residents with a breakthrough infection required hospitalization or died within 30 days (8.6%). Residents with severe infection were more likely to be aged 85 years and older and to have certain comorbidities, like [heart disease](#) and [kidney disease](#).

"The goal of the study was to examine how often breakthrough infections and severe illness occur among nursing [home residents](#) who have received the COVID-19 vaccination series," said the study's co-author, Sarah D. Berry, M.D., M.P.H., Associate Director, Musculoskeletal Research Center and Associate Scientist, Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research at Hebrew SeniorLife.

"Despite changes in the COVID-19 virus, the risk of severe infection in vaccinated [older adults](#) in nursing homes is low. Given that the pandemic continues and testing policies have relaxed, this data provides prognostic information for nursing home facilities faced with continued outbreaks," Dr. Berry added.

The study's findings are significant, Dr. Berry said, because "rates of BTI and serious illness may vary with other variants, but risk factors for serious illness are likely similar and may help providers predict who will get sick during future outbreaks."

**More information:** Ana Montoya et al, Resident Factors Associated With Breakthrough SARS-CoV-2 Infections, *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jamda.2023.02.102](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamda.2023.02.102)

Provided by Hebrew SeniorLife Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research

Citation: Study shows breakthrough COVID was rare among vaccinated seniors (2023, April 3) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-04-breakthrough-covid-rare-vaccinated-seniors.html>

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