

# More than three-quarters of Americans 16 and older have been infected with COVID: CDC

July 5 2023, by Cara Murez

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While a little more than half of American adults think they've had COVID-19, the reality is about 77.5% have been infected at least once, new government data shows.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released [final estimates](#) for people ages 16 and up for 2022.

About 96.7% of adults had antibodies to the virus either from [infection](#), vaccination or a combination of the two, the CDC reported. But U.S. Census data shows that only 54.9% of Americans think they have had COVID.

Estimates for children were previously released, using data from commercial testing laboratories, in which nine of 10 people under age 18 had been infected, *CBS News* reported.

While [young adults](#) and [teens](#) had the highest percentage of prior infection at 87.1%, seniors were the least likely to have had a prior infection, with about 56.5% of those over 65 having had COVID, the CDC found. The teen and young adult category includes those ages 16 to 29.

"It's become very difficult to measure prior infection in vaccine effectiveness studies. So, if you think about the typical person being hospitalized that's picked up in one of these studies, they may have had half a dozen prior infections that they did a nasal swab at home and were never reported," the CDC's [Ruth Link-Gelles](#) said at a meeting of its outside advisors recently, *CBS News* reported.

Studies on vaccine effectiveness should now be seen "in the context" of most people having previous antibodies, Link-Gelles said.

Still, having those antibodies isn't fully protective because immunity

wanes.

That can be seen in one specific datapoint, that 17% of COVID hospitalizations by the end of last year were from reinfections, according to a recent [CDC study](#).

These federal figures have made it clear how much the virus spread undetected or unreported, *CBS News* reported.

Infection rates in Hispanic people were 80.6%, while in [white people](#) that number was 80%. Black people had infection rates of 75% and for Asian Americans it was 66.1%.

Data in the CDC dashboard for 47 states had Vermont with the lowest prevalence of past infections, at 64.4%, while Iowans had the highest percentage, at 90.6%, *CBS News* reported.

**More information:** The World Health Organization has more on [COVID-19](#).

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