

US will offer free COVID tests by mail by late September

August 26 2024, by Robin Foster



As a summer surge in COVID cases begins to ebb and Americans brace themselves for yet another wave of infections this winter, more free COVID tests will soon be available to all, federal health officials

announced Friday.

Starting in late September, every U.S. household can order up to four nasal swab tests when the federal program reopens, according to [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov).

The U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) agency that oversees the testing has not yet announced an exact date for ordering to begin. Since the pandemic began, the program has distributed over 900 million tests directly to American households, the notice said.

"COVID-19 testing can help you know if you have COVID-19 so you can decide what to do next, like getting treatment to reduce your risk of severe illness and taking steps to lower your chances of spreading the virus to others," the HHS announcement said.

The tests will detect the virus strains that are now circulating and can be ordered ahead of the [holiday season](#) when family and friends gather indoors, an HHS spokesperson told CBS News.

The news comes right on the heels of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's [approval](#) of updated mRNA COVID vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna for the fall season. Novavax is expected to get approval for its updated vaccine sometime this year.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommends](#) all Americans ages 6 months and older get a shot of the "updated 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine."

While most Americans have some immunity to COVID from prior infections or vaccinations, [government data](#) shows less than a quarter of U.S. adults signed up for last fall's COVID shots, CBS News reported.

Although deaths and serious infections have dropped dramatically since the pandemic began in 2020, hospitalizations have started to edge up in recent weeks, [CDC data](#) shows. In total, more than 1 million Americans have died from the virus.

More information: The CDC has more on [COVID-19](#).

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