

# UNMASK THE FACTS

January 3 - 16

January 16, 2022

## Americans can now order free COVID-19 home tests

The U.S. government launched an initiative that allows all citizens to order free at-home COVID-19 test kits. Every household, regardless of size, can receive up to 4 test kits by ordering through <https://www.covidtests.gov/> or going directly to the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) order form [here](#). Additionally, most Americans with private insurance can buy home tests online or in stores and have them paid for at the time of purchase or get reimbursed by submitting a claim to their insurer. This program launched last Saturday (1/15), and only tests bought from that date on are eligible.

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January 14, 2022

## CDC updates mask recommendations

CDC has recently clarified that some types of masks and respirators provide more protection to the wearer against COVID-19 than others. Loosely woven cloth products provide the least protection, layered finely woven products offer more protection, well-fitting disposable surgical masks and KN95s offer even more protection, and well-fitting NIOSH-approved respirators (including N95s) offer the highest level of protection. Overall, CDC recommends wearing the most protective mask that you can, ensuring that the mask fits well, and finding one that can be worn consistently.

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January 13, 2022

## The Supreme Court has ruled in favor of a vaccine mandate for many healthcare workers

While the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the Biden administration from enforcing a vaccine-or-testing mandate for large employers, the court upheld a regulation issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that mandates vaccines for almost all employees at hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care providers that receive federal funds. The governor of Puerto Rico [said that these verdicts do not affect current mandates of the island](#), according to two laws that give the government the power to take the necessary actions to address emergency situations and public health.

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January 16, 2022

## Child hospitalizations increase in the wake of the Omicron variant

In the U.S., more children are in the hospital with COVID-19 than ever before. Compared to January 2021, five times as many children under five years old are currently hospitalized with the virus. At the same time, [CDC is recommending](#) that moderately or severely immunocompromised 5-11-year-olds receive an additional primary dose of an mRNA vaccine 28 days after their second shot. At this time, only the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is authorized and recommended for children aged 5-11. No COVID-19 vaccine is currently authorized for children under five years old.

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January 7, 2022

## CDC shortens the mRNA booster timeline to 5 months

CDC updated its recommendation for when someone who has completed their primary series of the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine should get a booster shot. If an individual has completed either one of these mRNA vaccine series, the new recommendation states that they get a booster shot at least 5 months after their last dose (down from 6 months in previous guidance). CDC still recommends recipients of the J&J vaccine to get an mRNA vaccine booster shot at least 2 months after they take the Janssen vaccine.

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Americares is a health-focused relief and development organization that responds to people affected by poverty or disaster with life-changing health programs, medicine, medical supplies and emergency aid.

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