

UNMASK THE FACTS

January 2023

January 31, 2023

White House will end many COVID-19 support programs on May 11

The White House announced that the COVID-19 public health emergency will end in May. The end of the emergency will also mean the end of some support programs. For most people with private or public insurance, vaccines will continue to be free. Some states gave short-term Medicaid coverage for COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatment to the uninsured. This coverage could end for some people in the spring. The uninsured will likely have less access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests, or treatments after this date.

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January 26, 2023

FDA experts vote to make all COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots bivalent

A panel of experts that advise the FDA on its vaccine decisions voted to update all COVID-19 vaccines so that they contain the same ingredients as the two-strain shots that are now used as booster doses. The vote means that young children and others who haven't gotten a vaccine may soon be able to receive two-strain vaccines that more closely match the variants in the U.S. The FDA must sign off on this choice before it goes into effect.

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January 27, 2023

The XBB.1.5 variant of COVID-19 is on the rise in the U.S.

XBB.1.5 is the fastest spreading Omicron variant so far. In the U.S., it has spread like wildfire. In New England, it accounts for more than 84% of cases. The numbers vary by region. But, overall, they've been climbing. We don't know yet if XBB.1.5 causes more severe disease than other COVID-19 strains. It will take time to see how well vaccines work against it, but a [recent study](#) shows that the bivalent booster is as good against XBB.1.5 as it is against BA.5.

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January 26, 2023

FDA no longer allows the use of Evusheld to protect against COVID-19

The FDA does not allow the use of Evusheld because it's not expected to work well against XBB.1.5. Evusheld — unlike other antibody treatments — was not meant for infected patients but instead was given as a pre-exposure treatment to people at high risk for severe COVID-19, such as those with a very weak immune system. It could be allowed again if it's shown to work against future variants.

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January 30, 2023

COVID-19 is the 8th most common cause of death among children in the U.S.

A recent study found that COVID-19 was a leading cause of death for children 0-19 years old. Between August 2021 and July 2022, 821 children died from the virus at a rate of 1 per 100,000. COVID-19 ranked fifth in disease-related deaths and first in infectious or respiratory illness deaths, causing more deaths than the flu and pneumonia. While it's rare for kids and teens to die in the U.S., COVID-19 is now the leading cause of death from infectious disease for this age group.

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