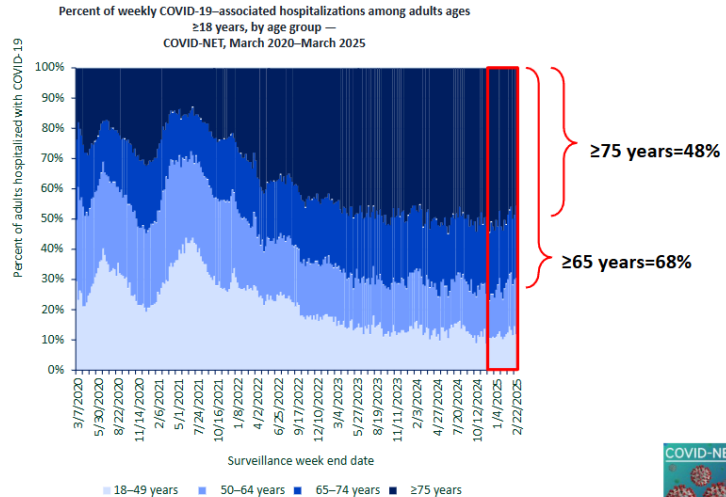


COVID Vaccination is Still Very Important

Adults ages ≥ 65 years comprise more than 2/3 of all COVID-19-associated hospitalizations among adults



During this same period of January 2024 through March 2025, children and adolescents ages 17 years and younger comprised 4% of all COVID-19-associated hospitalizations.

Panagiotakopoulos. ACIP Meeting. April 2025



21

2026 Vaccine Updates

The 2026–27 COVID vaccines were updated to target the XFG strain (a JN.1-lineage variant), the version of the virus circulating now, replacing last year's LP.8.1 formula.

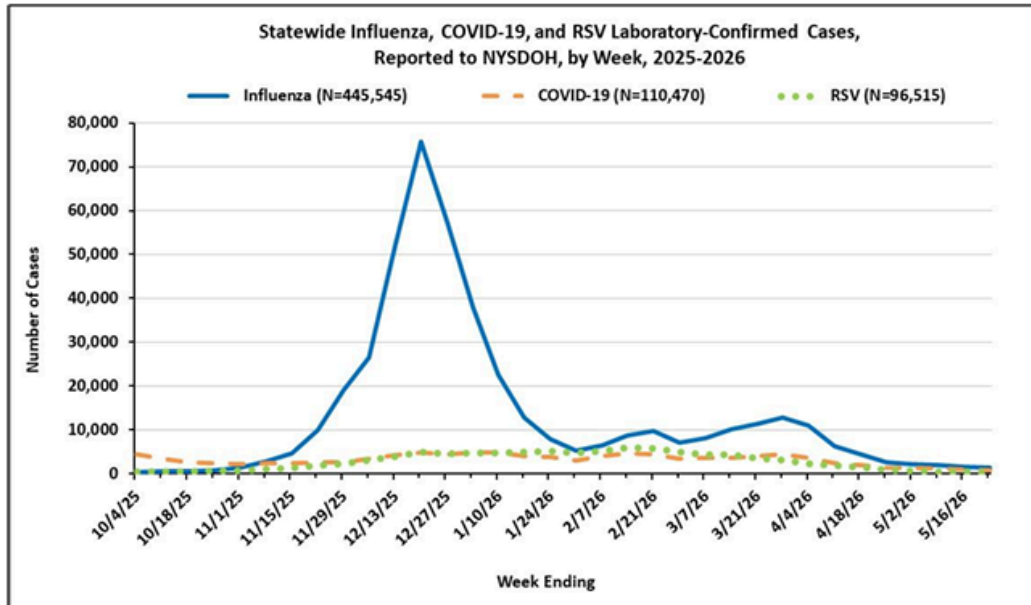
It's an update for anyone who's had a COVID shot before, and all four options (mNEXSPIKE, Pfizer, Spikevax, Novavax) carry the same new strain.

2026 Vaccine Options

Vaccine	Who we give it to	Notes
mNEXSPIKE (Moderna, mRNA)	HIGH-RISK patients and 65+ — our preferred choice for this group. Ages 12+.	Newer lower-dose Moderna. Same protection, fewer side effects than Spikevax.
Pfizer COMIRNATY (mRNA)	Everyone else — patient preference. Ages 12+; 5–11 uses the pediatric version.	Same clinical result as Spikevax/Novavax.
SPIKEVAX (Moderna, mRNA)	Everyone else — patient preference. Ages 12+; 6 mo–11 y uses the pediatric version	Only option for kids under 5.
NOVAVAX NUVAXOVID (protein, non-mRNA)	Anyone who does NOT want an mRNA shot or is worried about side effects.. Ages 12+.	Traditional protein-based vaccine (like most other shots). Generally the mildest side-effect profile. Single dose if they have had any prior COVID vaccine.

Our Recommendation: Anyone at high risk for COVID-19 (people over 65+!) should receive a dose of mNEXSPIKE in September **and** in March.

2025 Had Highest Flu Cases On Record in NY



2026 Flu Vaccine Updates

All three strains in the 2026–27 flu vaccine (H1N1, H3N2, and B) were changed from last year, and the new H3N2 component was picked specifically to cover "subclade K," the strain that emerged after last season's vaccine was already made and caused the mismatch people remember.

This year's shot is built for the virus we expect to see, not last year's.

Don't Get the Flu Shot Early

Pharmacies promote flu vaccination as early as August. I view this NOT for the clinical benefit of their patients, **it's for profit**.

The best time to get a flu shot is by the end of October so you have durable coverage through flu season, which can last until May. If you have a unique situation, ask a professional. Early is OK, but not August.

2026 Flu Vaccine Options

Vaccine	Who we give it to	Notes
mFLUSIVA (Moderna, mRNA)	65+ — our default for seniors. (Licensed 50+; we reserve it for 65+.)	First mRNA flu shot (new this year). Beat a standard-dose shot by ~27% in trials. Expect a sore arm/tired day like a COVID mRNA shot.
FLUZONE HIGH-DOSE	65+ who do NOT want mRNA.	4x the antigen of regular Fluzone. Been the senior standard for years.
FLUBLOK (recombinant)	Ages 50+ (and 65+ if they want egg-free non-mRNA or a 'smaller shot')	Higher-antigen, egg-free. Better match to circulating virus than egg-grown vaccines.
FLUZONE (standard dose)	Everyone else — 6 months and up.	Standard shot. All ages 6 mo+ get the full 0.5 mL.

Our Recommendation: Anyone at high risk for Influenza (people over 65+!) should receive a dose of mFLUSIVA or Fluzone High Dose in October or November.

Why Vaccine Rules Changed — and What It Means for You

A lot of patients have asked us why the "rules" for COVID and flu shots seem to keep changing. Here is what happened, in plain terms.

How it normally works

FDA reviews each vaccine for safety and effectiveness and approves it. **CDC** then decides who should get it, based on advice from an expert committee called **ACIP**. Doctors, pharmacies, and insurance companies have relied on those recommendations for decades. New York law used to point directly to ACIP for what pharmacists were allowed to give.

What changed

June 2025	The U.S. Health Secretary dismissed all 17 members of ACIP, the CDC advisory committee that has decided for decades who should receive which vaccines, and appointed new members.
Aug 2025	FDA approved the 2025–26 COVID vaccines but narrowed the label to adults 65+ and people with a risk condition. Because pharmacy vaccine authority in New York was tied to CDC/ACIP recommendations, many healthy New Yorkers could not get a COVID shot at a pharmacy.
Sept 2025	Governor Hochul issued an executive order letting New York pharmacists give COVID vaccines without a prescription, and the State adopted its own guidance (with neighboring Northeast states) recommending the vaccine for everyone 6 months and up.
Mar 2026	A federal court, in a lawsuit brought by the American Academy of Pediatrics and other medical groups, paused the new ACIP appointments and the votes that committee had taken. The practical result: no functioning federal committee to issue this fall's vaccine recommendations.
May 2026	New York passed two laws: (1) state health law no longer depends on ACIP — the NYS Health Commissioner can set vaccine recommendations, and pharmacists can vaccinate children as young as 2 for COVID; (2) insurers must cover vaccines the State recommends.
Aug 2026	FDA approved the updated 2026–27 COVID vaccines (new strain) and this year's flu vaccines (all three strains updated). Safety and effectiveness review by FDA is unchanged.
Sept 10, 2026	NYS and NYC Health Departments issued 2026–27 guidance, adopting the recommendations of the American Medical Association and the Vaccine Integrity Project (among others): flu vaccine for everyone 6 months+, and COVID vaccine for most people 6 months+, with emphasis on young children, older adults, pregnancy, and anyone with a risk condition.

Where things stand today

The vaccines themselves are the same FDA-approved products, made the same way, reviewed the same way. What changed is **who is writing the recommendations**. With the federal committee paused, New York now follows the recommendations of the country's major medical societies, and state law makes sure pharmacies can give the shots and insurance covers them.

Bottom line: if you want a flu or COVID vaccine this fall, you can get one here, and your insurance is required to cover it. If you have questions about which one is right for you, ask the pharmacist.

NY 2026 GUIDELINES FOR COVID, FLU, and RSV ON THE NEXT PAGE

Respiratory Virus Immunization Recommendations

ALIGNED WITH EVIDENCE AND GUIDANCE FROM:



American Academy
of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN



AMA
AMERICAN MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION

VACCINE
INTEGRITY
PROJECT

ACOG
American College of
Obstetricians & Gynecologists

IDSA



**Children and
Adolescents
0-18 years**



Influenza (flu)

Annual flu vaccine for all
children 6 months+



**Respiratory
syncytial virus (RSV)**

All infants <8 months, if
no protection from RSV
vaccine during pregnancy
and children 8-19 months
in certain risk groups



COVID-19

All young children
ages 6-23 months and
children 2-18 years in
certain risk groups or if
desired



Pregnancy

Annual flu vaccine
(avoid nasal spray flu
vaccine)

One-time RSV vaccine in
first eligible pregnancy
if 32-36 weeks pregnant,
given between September 1
and March 1

Annual updated
COVID-19 vaccine



Adults 19-64 years

Annual flu vaccine for
all adults ages 19+

One-time RSV vaccine
for adults ages 50-74 at
increased risk of severe RSV

Annual updated
COVID-19 vaccine



Older Adults 65+ years

Annual flu vaccine for all
adults, enhanced flu vaccine
(high dose, adjuvanted,
recombinant, or mRNA) for
65+, if possible

One-time RSV vaccine
recommended for adults
ages 50-74 at increased
risk and all adults age 75+

Annual updated
COVID-19 vaccine for
adults 65+, followed by
a second dose 6 months
later to boost protection



Immunocompromised

Annual flu vaccine for
those ages ≥6 months
(avoid nasal spray flu
vaccine)

Single dose of RSV vaccine
for those ages ≥18 years and
for those ages <18 years,
administration should be
guided by shared decision
making

Annual updated
COVID-19 vaccine for
those ages ≥6 months



Healthcare Personnel

Annual flu vaccine

Follow age- and risk-
based RSV vaccine
recommendations

Annual updated
COVID-19 vaccine



Scan here to access additional helpful vaccine and immunization resources at www.SpreadTheFacts.org

©2025 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.