



Town of New Castle, NH
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COVID Update October 4, 2022

1) An important note from Kathy: I am absolutely thrilled to have an addition to our Public Health team. Please welcome my colleague Diane Coniglio, PhD as our Deputy health officer. Amongst many professional skills, she has tremendous experience in medical writing and translating doctor language to plain English. She has written essentially all of this update and she and her husband have been long time contributors to the updates in general. I'd like to express my sincere gratitude for her and their assistance.

2) UPDATED COVID-19 BOOSTER SHOTS

New updated COVID-19 bivalent boosters made by Pfizer and Moderna were authorized in September 2022. "Bivalent" means they target two different coronavirus variants – the original strain from 2019 and later Omicron subvariants (BA.4/BA.5) that are more contagious and are causing most COVID-19 cases in the US.

Updated booster shots will not only help restore antibody levels that likely dropped off since your last shot but also will give broader protection against infection from newer coronavirus variants. This is important for two reasons:

- As we approach the colder months, people are more likely to be indoors. Community transmission levels (a measure of COVID spread in a community) are high in all NH counties right now, even though community numbers are low. This is because people aren't self-reporting positive tests to the state.

- About 1 in 5 people who recover from COVID-19 still have one or more long COVID symptoms. Read more: [Long COVID or Post-COVID Conditions | CDC](#)

People 12 years and up can get an updated bivalent booster if they are eligible. Being eligible means you got all primary vaccine doses and one or more booster shots at least 2 months ago.

- People 18+ can get either brand of updated booster (Pfizer or Moderna).

- People 12-17 can only get the updated Pfizer booster. Moderna's isn't approved for this age group.

- It doesn't matter which vaccine(s) you got initially. You can safely mix and match. · Find a vaccine near you at www.vaccines.gov. Read more: [Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines Including Boosters | CDC](#)

3) AT-HOME COVID-19 TEST EXPIRATION UPDATE- Dates extended for many tests

With at-home COVID-19 testing being the norm these days, you may notice that some of your stockpiled home test kits are expiring in the next few months. This includes test kits you got from the federal or state government and kits that you bought online or in stores.

The FDA recently announced that COVID-19 tests from many different manufacturers can safely be used a few months past their expiration dates. Check here to see if your soon-to-expire COVID-19 home test kit is still useable: [At-Home OTC COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests | FDA](#).

Find the row in the table that matches the manufacturer and test name on the label of your box.

- If the Expiration Date column says the shelf-life is “extended,” you will see a link to “updated expiration dates.” Click that link, find the original expiration date on your box (you need the lot number from the label), and look for the new expiration date in the “updated expiration dates” table.

- If the Expiration Date column does not say the shelf-life is extended, that means the expiration date on the label of your test box is still correct. The table will say "See box label" instead of linking to updated expiration dates.

Don't use a COVID-19 home test whose expiration date has passed and has not been extended. The FDA will update their guidance on this topic as more shelf-life extensions are authorized, so keep checking.

4) FLU SEASON AHEAD: Can you get a flu shot and a COVID-19 shot at the same time?

YES, if the timing is right for both. Most people should get a flu shot by the end of October to have protection during peak flu season. If you're due for a COVID-19 booster shot around this same time, it can safely be given with the flu shot.

If you get both shots at the same time, you may have side effects like tiredness, headache, and muscle ache just as you would if you got the shots separately, but they should resolve quickly. Read more: [Frequently Asked Influenza \(Flu\) Questions: 2022-2023 Season | CDC](#)

Yours in health,

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And

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