



Growing Number of COVID-19 Deaths Among Vaccinated People: Reports

Description

An increasing number of COVID-19 deaths are occurring among individuals in the United States who have been [vaccinated](#), according to federal data.

In August of 2021, roughly 18.9 percent of COVID-19 deaths happened among individuals who were vaccinated, an [ABC News](#) analysis of the data shows. Six months later in February 2022, that figure had risen to over 40 percent as the highly-transmissible Omicron variant made its way across the globe.

Similarly, in September 2021, just 1.1 percent of COVID-19 deaths occurred among Americans who had been fully vaccinated and boosted once. Five months later in February, that percentage had jumped to about 25 percent, according to ABC News.

A separate analysis of federal data by [CNN](#) shows that in the second half of September 2021—when the Delta variant was at its peak—less than a quarter of all COVID-19 deaths were among individuals who were vaccinated with at least two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer/BioNTech mRNA vaccines or a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. However, just months later in January and February as Omicron surged, that figure had jumped to 40 percent.

Some experts believe the increase in deaths among fully vaccinated people or “breakthrough infections” in those who have received all their shots is not overly concerning, saying it is because while more and more people become fully vaccinated, new variants emerge and vaccine protection begins to wane as fewer people continue to get booster shots.

“These data should not be interpreted as vaccines not working. In fact, these real-world analyses continue to reaffirm the incredible protection these vaccines afford especially when up to date with boosters,” said John Brownstein, an epidemiologist at Boston Children’s Hospital and an ABC News contributor.

Despite an increasing number of deaths among the vaccinated, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [states](#) that vaccines are safe and effective. Data from the government agency says that overall, the risk of death from COVID-19 is roughly five times higher in unvaccinated individuals than in those who have had at least their initial dose of a vaccine.

However, in some cases, serious adverse events such as thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (blood clots), myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle), and pericarditis (inflammation of the outer lining of the heart) have been documented.

As of May 4, around 257.9 million people in the United States, or 77.7 percent of the total population in the nation have received at least one dose of vaccine, while roughly 219.9 million people, or 66.2 percent of the total U.S. population, have been fully vaccinated.

Around 100.9 million of those who are fully vaccinated have received a booster shot, while 49.4 percent of those eligible for booster shots have not yet had one.

As the Omicron variant swept through the nation, an increasing number of vulnerable, older populations were being hospitalized, and 73 percent of deaths have been among those 65 and older, despite the fact that 90 percent of seniors have had all of their vaccine shots.

However, a large percentage—a third of them—have not yet had their booster jab.

“This trend in increased risk among the elderly further supports the need for community-wide immunization,” Brownstein said. “Older populations, especially those with underlying conditions, continue to be at great risk of severe complications, especially as immunity wanes. The best way to protect them is to make sure everyone around them is fully immunized.”

The data comes a month after pharmaceutical and biotechnology company Moderna said that preliminary results from its study on a COVID-19 vaccine intended to protect against variants showed that it [outperformed the company's currently authorized booster shot, mRNA-1273](#).

Moderna said on April 19 that its mRNA-1273.211 shot, its first bivalent booster vaccine candidate, showed “superiority” against the Beta, Delta, and Omicron variants of the virus one month after being administered, compared to the booster shot of its original vaccine currently in use.

by Katabella Roberts is a reporter currently based in Turkey. She covers news and business for The Epoch Times, focusing primarily on the United States.

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