New Data Show Unvaccinated 15 Times More Likely to Die from COVID-19 + Adult ICU Patients Hit Record Highs

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New Data Show Unvaccinated 15 Times More Likely to Die from COVID-19; Urgency to get Vaccinated as ICU Admittance Hits Record High

New data from NCDHHS' weekly respiratory surveillance report show that unvaccinated people were 15.4 times, or 1,540 percent, more likely to die from COVID-19 during the four-week period ending Aug. 21, 2021.This comes as the state hit a pandemic high on Aug. 26 with 912 adults in the ICU with COVID-19. The number of COVID-19 patients on ventilators also reached a record high at 574.

"The vast majority of people dying with COVID-19 are unvaccinated. If you are not vaccinated please don't wait until it is too late," said Mandy K. Cohen, M.D., Secretary of the NC Department of Health and Human Services. "The authorized and approved vaccines have been through rigorous clinical trials and met scientific standards. Millions of North Carolinians have been safely vaccinated."

During the week ending Aug. 21, 2021, unvaccinated people were also 4.4 times, or 440 percent, more likely to catch COVID-19 than vaccinated people. The difference between vaccinated and unvaccinated teens was even greater during the week ending Aug. 21, 2021, with unvaccinated people aged 12 to 17 being 6.3 times, or 630 percent, more likely to get COVID-19 than vaccinated people in the same age group.

While vaccines are the best protection against serious illness, hospitalization and death, monoclonal antibody therapy can reduce the severity of COVID-19 symptoms and decrease the likelihood of hospitalization, especially in high-risk patients. If you test positive for COVID-19, monoclonal antibody therapy must be administered within 10 days of your first COVID-19 symptoms, so it is crucial to get tested early.

To get a vaccine near you, visit MySpot.nc.gov (English) or Vacunate.nc.gov (Spanish) or call 888-675-4567. You can also text your zip code to 438829 to find vaccine locations near you.

FDA Grants Full Approval for Pfizer Vaccine for Those 16 and Up

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, which Pfizer is calling Comirnaty, for the prevention of COVID-19 in individuals 16 years of age and older.

"Vaccines are our most important tool in the fight against COVID-19," said NC Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. "All authorized vaccines have met rigorous testing and scientific standards. Millions of North Carolinians have been safely vaccinated, but for some people full FDA approval provides additional confidence. If you are not vaccinated, we urge you: please don't wait to vaccinate."

The Pfizer vaccine will continue to be available under emergency use authorization (EUA) for teens 12-15. FDA approval for this age group will require additional time as the vaccine was not authorized for younger teens until May 2021, six months after it was granted EUA for people 16 and older. All available vaccines in the United States have been under an EUA.

Rigorous clinical trials among thousands of people have proven that vaccines are safe and effective. So far, more than 170 million Americans have been safely vaccinated against COVID-19. Read more from the FDA.

You can stop the Delta variant of COVID-19

The Delta variant, which is more contagious than other strains, makes up most of North Carolina's COVID-19 cases. You can protect yourself from hospitalization and death and help stop how quickly severe cases are rising in our state. Don't wait to vaccinate. Find your spot to get vaccinated at myspot.nc.gov.

Website Launched to Inform North Carolina Teens About COVID Vaccines

NCDHHS has launched a new website, TeenVaxFacts.com, that is dedicated to providing teens with the information, tools and resources they need to educate themselves, their friends and family members about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines.

With materials such as a COVID-19 vaccine discussion guide, vaccine locations and informative videos, this site serves as a place for teens to get the facts about COVID-19.

Vaccines are critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting people from serious illness, especially as young people head back to school. The more contagious Delta variant is spreading across North Carolina and COVID-19 rates are increasing in young people. Nearly all cases of severe disease, hospitalization and death continue to occur among those not fully vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccines have been thoroughly tested and found to be safe and effective for anyone 12 and older. TeenVaxFacts.com sends a clear, fact-based message to teens and

parents: Don't wait to vaccinate.

For more information about COVID-19 vaccines, visit YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov or call the state's COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center at 888-675-4567.

$100 Cards Available for First-time COVID-19 Vaccinations, $25 Cards for Drivers Through Aug. 31

North Carolina continues to offer $100 Summer Cards* at some vaccine sites across the state to offset the time and transportation costs of getting vaccinated.

The $100 Summer Cards* are available through Aug. 31 to anyone 18 and older who gets their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at a participating site—while supplies last.

In addition to providing a $100 Summer Card* to those who get their first dose of vaccine, North Carolina continues to offer $25 Summer Cards to those who drive others to their vaccination appointment.

Those interested in the $100 Summer Card* for first-time vaccinations and $25 Summer Card* for drivers should call 888-675-4567 or find a participating location here. Locations are only offering cards on the dates shown.

Summer Card providers have a limited number of $100 cards. Cards are available while supplies last and are only available on the dates listed here**.**

*Summer Card is in the form of a Prepaid Mastercard®. Prepaid card is issued by MetaBank®, N.A., Member FDIC.

COVID-19 Testing

Anyone who has symptoms of or has been exposed to COVID-19 should get tested as soon as possible. To find a testing site in your community, go to www.ncdhhs.gov/GetTested.

People who are not experiencing serious symptoms should not go to the emergency department for routine COVID-19 testing. People should seek medical attention immediately for serious symptoms such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips or face.

For an up-to-date list of no-cost community testing events, visit the No-Cost Testing Events webpage. Additionally, all North Carolinians can request a free at-home COVID-19 testing kit. Learn more.

Get the Latest Information

- Visit the NCDHHS COVID-19 website for information, a data dashboard, updates, live briefings, the latest guidance and more.
- Go to North Carolina's COVID-19 Information Hub for resources, information and assistance across state government, including the latest news releases.
- Check out YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov to learn more about finding your spot to get your shot, videos about the COVID-19 vaccine, and other resources.
- Follow NCDHHS on social media for advance notice of press briefings and a recap.

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