



Pharmacy Pearls

2025-2026 COVID Vaccine Updates

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What You Need to Know

- On August 27th, 2025, the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for COVID-19 vaccines was lifted
 - All available vaccines (Moderna, Pfizer, Novavax) are now fully FDA-approved, with updated federal restrictions and prescribing requirements
- Federal guidance recommends vaccination for:**
 - Individuals ≥65 years old, and
 - Individuals 12–64 years old with at least one high-risk condition*
- On October 3rd, 2025, Governor Kathy Hochul issued an **executive order expanding COVID-19 vaccine access in NYS (see recommendations below)**
 - Non-patient specific orders for Moderna, Pfizer, and Novavax now **allow pharmacists to prescribe and administer vaccines without a prescription**
 - Prescription **may still** be required for “off-label” use

Per ACIP (Oct 7, 2025), COVID-19 vaccination is now based on **shared decision-making**, with **greatest benefit** for those **at increased risk** for severe disease*

NYS COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations

Adults	Children & Adolescents	Pregnancy & Lactation
No Prescription Needed	No Prescription Needed	Pregnant individuals, regardless of trimester
All adults ≥65 years old	ALL children 6-23 months	
Adults 19–64 years should be vaccinated if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Have risk factors* for severe COVID-19ii. Are at increased risk of exposure (e.g., healthcare workers, residents or staff in congregate care settings)iii. Live with or provide care for individuals at high risk for severe disease	Ages 2-18 years old should be vaccinated if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Have risk factors* for severe COVID-19ii. Live in a long-term care facility or other congregate settingiii. Have not previously received a COVID-19 vaccinationiv. Have household members who are at high risk* for severe disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Lactating individuals (no need to stop or delay breastfeeding)ii. Individuals in the postpartum periodiii. Those who are trying to conceive or planning pregnancy (no need to delay pregnancy after vaccination)
Prescription Needed	Prescription Needed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Providers may administer the vaccine to individuals consistent with “off-label” use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Providers may administer the vaccine to individuals consistent with “off-label” use at the request of their parent/guardian	

*High-Risk Conditions

Asthma, cancer, stroke, CKD, chronic lung disease, chronic liver disease, cystic fibrosis, diabetes type 1 & 2, disabilities including down syndrome, epilepsy, hemophilia, heart conditions (HF, CAD), HIV, **mental health conditions (i.e., depression)**, dementia, Parkinson's, **BMI ≥25, physical inactivity**, pregnancy, immunodeficiencies, smoking (current or former), substance use disorder, solid organ or blood stem-cell transplant, tuberculosis, use of immunosuppressants (i.e., corticosteroids)

2025-2026 COVID Vaccines

Manufacturer	Vaccine	Age Range
Moderna	Spikevax®	6 months +
	mNexspike®	12 years +
Pfizer	Comirnaty®	5 years +
Novavax	Novavaxid™	12 years +

Adverse effects: injection site reactions (>10%) and flu-like symptoms (>10%)

Patients may receive any available COVID vaccine, regardless of their primary series, and can receive other vaccinations (i.e., influenza, RSV, pneumococcal) at the same visit

Vaccine Availability in the Region

Pharmacy	Availability
Strong & Highland	12+ years old
UR Thompson	5+ years old
Wegmans	12+ years old
CVS	5+ years old
Walgreens	12+ years old
Walmart	12+ years old
Tops	12+ years old

This list is not comprehensive. Patients who prefer a different pharmacy should contact it directly. Vaccination for children under 5 is recommended in the clinician office.

Insurance Coverage

Excellus
MVP
UR Health Plan
NYS Medicaid (19+ only)

Insurance plans listed above have confirmed coverage of any available COVID vaccine. Patients should contact their insurance provider if they are unsure whether the COVID vaccine is covered.

References

- Department of Health [Internet]. [cited 2025 Oct 9]. COVID-19 Vaccine. Available from: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-0>
- Hochul K. Executive Order No. 52: Declaring a Disaster in the State of New York Due to Federal Actions Related to Vaccine Access. 2025.
- American Academy of Pediatrics. Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine Dosing Quick Reference Guide: Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, and Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine Products. 2025 Oct