

DeWine, state public health officials encourage Ohioans to get new COVID-19 booster

By **Laura Hancock**
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COLUMBUS, Ohio – Gov. Mike DeWine and state public health officials are encouraging Ohioans again to get the latest formulation of the coronavirus booster, particularly those who are older and with health conditions that are immunocompromised.

The number of Ohio residents who have received the newly approved coronavirus booster was 87,871 people, according to Thursday figures from the Ohio Department of Health. Of those, 58,529 people were aged 60 and older.

On average, two people a day continue to die in Ohio with the coronavirus, DeWine said during a Thursday afternoon coronavirus update.

Anyone ages 6 months and older is eligible for the vaccine. Studies have shown the newest vaccine to be effective, said Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff.

To find out if your local pharmacy carries the latest vaccine, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at <https://www.vaccines.gov> or call 1-800-232-0233.

Vanderhoff encouraged Ohioans to also obtain flu shots.

"Get one shot in each arm to reduce some of the soreness," he said.

In May, the federal government allowed the COVID-19 public-health emergency status to expire. That meant that the government would no longer be the sole supplier of vaccines. Providers now are purchasing the vaccine from manufacturers on the commercial market.

But there are programs for the uninsured to obtain the vaccine. Children can get shots through the [Vaccines for Children program](#). The CDC has created the [Bridge Access Program](#), which will be in effect through the end of 2024. The CDC has contracted with CVS, Walgreens and eTrue North pharmacies to provide free COVID-19 vaccines for the uninsured. Visit www.vaccines.gov for more information.

Those programs will not be affected if there is a federal government shutdown, Vanderhoff said.

“The funding and doses have already been allocated,” he said.

DeWine, who recently was diagnosed with COVID, said he’s feeling much better and is testing negative.

“My experience was fairly light, candidly,” he said. “This was the second time I’ve had it. I had been vaccinated as you know several times before. And I took the drugs that were prescribed as soon as I was diagnosed with it and frankly have had a pretty easy time. I’m in my 10th day (since first testing positive) and I feel good.”

The governor and First Lady Fran DeWine are getting their annual physicals on Monday. The first lady will receive both the flu and COVID-19 shots. The governor will get only get the flu shot for now.

Research shows that people receive an elevated level of COVID-19 antibodies after being infected for at least 90 days, Vanderhoff said.