

Rising U.S. and EU COVID-19 Cases and Hospitalization Rates and the Need for COVID-19 Vaccination

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With the holiday season upon us and more time spent indoors in close proximity to others, the risk of respiratory virus infection increases.¹In November, COVID-19 cases and hospitalization rates increased across the U.S. and the European Union (EU).²⁻⁴ **Experts have reiterated that, despite COVID-19 fatigue, our best line of defense to protect communities is to get vaccinated with the latest vaccines.**^{5,6}

Without vaccination, these rates may continue to rise, posing significant risks for vulnerable populations such as the elderly and immunocompromised.^{1,5} In the U.S., COVID-19 cases are increasing in many states.² Preliminary data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of November 25, 2023, showed that COVID-19 led to more hospitalizations than influenza, with a hospitalization rate of 4.36 per 100,000 people, compared to 0.83 for influenza.⁷

As of November 26, 2023, in the EU, there was an overall increasing trend in COVID-19 cases.⁴**Severity indicators such as hospital admission, intensive care unit admissions and death rates continued to increase due to COVID-19, especially in individuals aged 65 and older.**⁴

These rising rates could be slowed if immunization rates increase. In the U.S. and EU, a significant proportion of the population has not received an updated COVID-19 vaccine, despite health authority recommendations.^{6,9-11} **This immunization season, people have options for vaccination, with two vaccine technologies available to protect against COVID-19: protein-based and mRNA vaccines.**^{6,8}**It is critical that we remain vigilant to help protect against COVID-19.**

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