



COVID-19 Response: Timeline of Events and Major Milestones

Timeline as of August 24, 2022

References below were pulled from a variety of online sources (federal documents, media reporting, legislative tracking, and health agency sites, etc.)

- Late 2019**
- December 12:** A cluster of patients in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China begins to experience shortness of breath and fever.
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- December 31:** The World Health Organization (WHO) China Country Office is informed of a number of cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology (unknown cause) detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province.
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- Early 2020**
- January 7:** CDC Establishes a 2019-nCoV Incident Management Structure.
- January 17:** CDC begins screening passengers on direct and connecting flights from Wuhan, China at San Francisco, New York City, and Los Angeles airports. CDC deploys a team to Washington state to assist with contact tracing efforts in response to the first reported case of 2019-nCoV in the U.S.
- January 20:** CDC confirms the first U.S. laboratory-confirmed case of 2019-nCoV in the U.S. in Washington State.
- January 22:** The WHO confirms human-to-human spread of the novel coronavirus.
- January 30:** The WHO declares the novel coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency of international concern.
- January 31:** U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services declares the SARS-CoV-2 virus a public health emergency and the White House 2019 Novel Coronavirus Task Force announces implementation of new travel policies effective February 2.
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- February 8:** One of the first CDC test kits arrives at a public health laboratory in east Manhattan, New York City, New York. The laboratory reports that the test produces ‘untrustworthy results.’”
- February 9:** CDC updates its evaluation and testing guidance for Patients Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 to any patients with a severe respiratory illness even in the absence of travel history to affected areas or known exposure to another case to prepare for additional person-to-person spread.

February 26: In a CDC telebriefing update on COVID-19, NCIRD Director Dr. Nancy Messonnier warns the nation to prepare for community spread. “It’s not so much a question of if this will happen, but when this will happen and how many people in this country will have severe illness.”

March 6: President Trump indicates anyone who needs a COVID-19 test can get one.

March 11: The WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic.

March 15: States begin to shut down to prevent the spread of COVID-19. New York City public school system shuts down, Ohio calls for restaurants and bars to close.

March 28: The White House extends social distancing measures until the end of April 2020.

April 3: CDC recommends that all people wear a mask when outside of their home.

April 11: All 50 states, DC, USVI, CNMI, Guam, and Puerto Rico are under a disaster declaration simultaneously.

April 30: President Trump launches Operation Warp Speed, an initiative to produce a vaccine for the coronavirus as quickly as possible.

Mid 2020

May 1: The FDA issues an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for investigational antiviral drug remdesivir.

May 2: WHO renews emergency declaration from three months prior calling the pandemic a global public health crisis.

May 28: U.S. COVID-19 death toll surpasses 100,000.

July 27: Pfizer and Moderna each announce the start of their phase 3 clinical trial for Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine BNT162b2 and Moderna mRNA-1273 vaccine.

July 29: Dr. Nancy Messonnier speaks to CDC ACIP about proposed plans for COVID-19 vaccine implementation.

Late 2020

October 16: Awardees must submit COVID-19 vaccine distribution and administration plans to the CDC.

December 3: CDC ACIP recommends that health care professionals and residents of long-term care facilities be prioritized for the COVID-19 vaccine.

December 11: The FDA issues an EUA for the first COVID-19 vaccine, Pfizer-BioNTech.

December 18: The FDA issues an EUA for the second COVID-19 vaccine, Moderna.

December 24: It is estimated that more than 1 million people in the U.S. are vaccinated against COVID-19.

Early 2021

January 12: The Trump administration announces that those over 65 are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

February 27: FDA approves EUA for Johnson & Johnson one shot COVID-19 vaccine.

March 8: CDC announces fully vaccinated people can gather indoors without masks.

April 2: CDC announces fully vaccinated individuals can travel domestically in the U.S. without a COVID test.

April 13: CDC recommends pausing the use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine because of blood clot complications.

April 21: U.S. surpasses 200 million vaccinations administered.

April 23: CDC recommends continued use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

May 10: FDA expands Pfizer-BioNTech EUA to ages 12-15.

May 13: CDC announces that those fully vaccinated can take off their masks indoors and at outdoors at gatherings of any size.

Mid 2021

June 1: The Delta variant becomes the dominant variant in the U.S. and kicks off a third wave of infections during the summer of 2021.

June 25: CDC releases MMWR on symptoms of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal ideation among public health workers during the pandemic.

July 27: CDC releases updated guidance for everyone in areas with substantial or high transmission to wear a mask while indoors.

August 23: FDA licenses the first COVID-19 vaccine Comirnaty (Pfizer-BioNTech) for individuals 16 and older.

Late 2021

September 22: FDA expands Pfizer-BioNTech EUA to authorize booster doses for individuals 65 years of age and older, individuals 18 through 64 years of age at high risk of severe COVID-19, and individuals 18 through 64 years of age whose frequent institutional or occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2 puts them at high risk of serious complications of COVID-19 including severe COVID-19.

November 2: CDC ACIP recommends Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric COVID-19 vaccine for children 5 to 11 years.

November 19: FDA amended the EUA for both the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines authorizing use of a single booster dose for all individuals 18 years of age.

November 26: WHO classifies a new variant, Omicron, as a variant of concern.

Early 2022

January 5: CDC endorses ACIP recommendation to expand eligibility of booster doses to those 12-15 years old.

January 22: FDA licenses COVID-19 vaccine Spikevax (Moderna) for individuals 18 years and older.

March 17: A Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health study found that harassment of public health officials was widespread during the initial phase of the pandemic, March 2020-January 2021.

April 20: CDC ACIP recommends second booster doses for adults 50 years and older.

Mid 2022

June 14: FDA issues EUA for a two-dose Moderna COVID-19 vaccines series for children ages 6-11 years and ages 12-17.

June 15: FDA issues EUA for both the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine 2-dose primary series for children 6 months - 5 years and the Pfizer 3-dose series for children 6 months - 4 years.

June 18: CDC ACIP recommends the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines for young children 6mos to 5/6 years of age.

June 23: CDC ACIP recommends a two-dose Moderna COVID-19 vaccines series for children ages 6-11 years, under the EUA issued by FDA.

July 13: FDA issues EUA for Novavax COVID-19 vaccine.

Late 2022

September 1 or 2: ACIP will likely meet to discuss Moderna and Pfizer bivalent COVID-19 booster for adults.