

US passes major vaccine milestone: 70% of adults now have at least 1 shot

Southern states lag behind the rest of the country.

Boosted by a recent uptake in vaccine administrations, the U.S. crossed a long-awaited milestone Monday in its race to vaccinate the country against the novel coronavirus.

Seventy percent of U.S. adults ages 18 and older, or roughly 180.7 million Americans, have received at least one vaccine dose, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported.

This is nearly a month after the country missed President Joe Biden's July 4 deadline to meet that threshold.

Although the majority of the country's adults have one shot, there is a major discrepancy among states, according to the CDC.

Health officials have been urging eligible residents to get their shots, which are free and shown to prevent hospitalization and death from the virus, as soon as possible as the more contagious variants like delta spread.

As of Monday, 22 states and the District of Columbia have 70% of their adult population with one dose, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Many of these states are located in the Northeast with Vermont leading the nation with over 86% of its adult residents receiving one shot, according to the health data.

A dozen states, almost all located in the South, haven't cracked the 60% mark for their adult residents with one shot, CDC data showed. Mississippi has the lowest percentage of adults with one shot, at 50%, according to the data.

Coronavirus cases and hospitalizations in the country have been on the rise, particularly in locations with low vaccination numbers, health officials said.

Officials in several states, including Mississippi, Alabama, Missouri and Arkansas, are reporting that the majority of their hospitalized patients are unvaccinated people.

The U.S. began vaccinating residents in December, starting with health care workers and the elderly. By mid-April, all residents above 18 were eligible and a month later, the Pfizer vaccine was approved for Americans over the age of 12.

Two of the three approved vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna, require two doses and use mRNA technology to protect against the virus. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires only one dose.

The seven-day average of new daily first shots administered peaked at 3.4 million on April 11 but it has declined to low of 217,884 on July 7, the CDC reported. Several states that had lagging vaccination numbers, however, saw a small jump in shots administered during the final weeks of July.

The seven-day average of first doses administered grew to 367,351 on July 27, the CDC data showed.

On Sunday, White House COVID-19 data director Cyrus Shahpar revealed that over 517,000 people received their first shot.

Anyone who needs help scheduling a free vaccine appointment can log onto [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).