

Why getting a COVID-19 vaccine is more complicated



PFIZER

This photo provided by Pfizer in August 2025 shows boxes for the updated COVID-19 vaccine Comirnaty.

Will you get a COVID-19 vaccine?

TOM MURPHY
AP Health Writer

REGIONAL – Will you get a COVID-19 vaccine? That has become a complicated question for many people.

The answer may depend on your age, insurance coverage, health and finding a health care professional who will give you the shot.

A once-straightforward seasonal vaccine process has become muddled this year because of new federal guidance on who the shots are approved for. It raises questions about whether pharmacists will provide the shots and if insurers will cover them.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has OK'd new shots from Pfizer, Moderna and Novavax, but the approvals came with some new caveats. And it's not clear yet how that will play out.

What has changed?

The shots were approved for people who are 65 and older and those who are younger and have a health condition that makes them vulnerable to severe COVID-19.

That includes people with asthma, cancer, heart or lung problems, obesity, depression, a history of smoking or physical inactivity.

"A high proportion of people would qualify for these vaccines even if they're not over 65," said Dr. Paul Sax, clinical director of the Division of Infectious Diseases at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

Until now, the U.S. — following guidance from independent experts who advise the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — has recommended yearly COVID-19 vaccinations for everyone age 6 months and older.

But Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. fired every member of that Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices earlier this year. The replacements he selected have yet to make new recommendations.

Where can I get a shot?

Most Americans visit drugstores to get their COVID-19 vaccines, according to the CDC. It's not clear yet how easy that will be this fall, depending on where you live.

Nineteen states have laws or regulations that only let pharmacists administer vaccines recommended by ACIP, according to the American Pharmacists Association.

In those states, pharmacies may not

be able to dole out shots even for people who fit the FDA's narrowed range until the committee makes its recommendation.

Plus some pharmacists may be reluctant to give shots to customers who fall outside the FDA's approval range, said Brigid Groves, a pharmacist and vice president with the American Pharmacists Association.

Will COVID-19 vaccines be covered by insurance?

For people age 65 and older, the FDA's decision means Medicare will cover the shots.

For everyone else, the answer is still evolving. Check with your insurer or the employer that provides coverage.

Employers and insurers have been covering the full bill for the shots because they have been recommended by ACIP.

Some may continue to do so. Walmart will cover the shots for employees and the health system Kaiser Permanente, which provides coverage for more than 12 million people, says it will keep covering them too.

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Lake George man arrested for DWI after hitting pedestrian

POST-STAR STAFF REPORT

QUEENSBURY – On Friday, Aug. 29 at around 5:15 p.m., a 2016 Jeep Cherokee operated by Brodie C. Gerber, 25, of Lake George, allegedly struck David J. Mitchell, 45, of Granville on Aviation Road in Queensbury, the New York State Police reported.

According to the police report, Gerber exited I-87 southbound and turned east onto Aviation Road when he hit Mitchell, who was standing partially in the roadway.

Mitchell reportedly sustained multiple serious injuries, including broken legs, and was initially transported to Glens Falls Hospital before being transferred to Albany Medical Center, where he remains in critical condition.

Police gathered statements from several

witnesses who reported seeing Mitchell walking in and out of traffic prior to the crash. EMS personnel who responded to the scene confirmed those reports.

Troopers conducted field sobriety tests on Gerber, which he allegedly failed. He was taken into custody and transported to SP Queensbury for processing. Gerber submitted to a chemical breath test which revealed a blood alcohol content of .17%. He was also evaluated at the scene by a drug recognition expert.

Gerber was charged with driving while intoxicated and released on his own recognizance following arraignment in Warren County CAP Court. He is scheduled to appear in Queensbury Town Court on September 8, 2025, at 9 a.m.

The New York State Police Collision Reconstruction Unit responded to process

the scene. The investigation remains ongoing and additional charges are possible.

Several other accidents involving pedestrians have been reported this year.

On August 17, a crash took place involving a car and a motorcycle on State Route 9L in Queensbury. During the crash, the motorcycle also hit two pedestrians who were in a nearby parking lot. The driver of the motorcycle — Austin L. Pagan, 18, of Queensbury — died as a result of his injuries. The two pedestrians sustained non-life-threatening injuries and were transported to area hospitals for further treatment.

In July, a pedestrian was killed after being struck by a commercial vehicle along State Route 9 in Moreau.

And at the start of the year, two pedestrians were struck in separate inci-

dents, one again near Aviation Mall and another in Malta. On January 18, a 2011 Dodge Ram operated by Kurt S. David, 62, of Queensbury was traveling east on Aviation Road when the Sheriff's Office says he struck Shan Mohamed Shaffe, 27, who was crossing the road near the westernmost entrance to Aviation Mall. Shaffe was airlifted to Albany Medical Center with serious injuries. Just a couple days later, a 2022 Chevrolet Colorado pickup truck had been traveling north on Route 9 near Cherry Choke Road in Malta when it struck a pedestrian who had been in the roadway. The pedestrian was brought to Albany Medical Center by Malta-Stillwater EMS for evaluation and treatment of serious medical injuries. The driver and the passenger in the pickup truck were both uninjured.