

## This is Our Shot to End the Pandemic

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***It's important that more people get vaccinated to keep moving our state in the right direction. Sen. Smith shares information about the COVID-19 vaccine and where Wisconsinites can get their shot.***

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MADISON, WI - Independence Day is a holiday always filled with many treasured traditions and memorable events. Unfortunately, last year we missed out on many of our favorite ways to celebrate America's founding – grilling out with friends and family, watching fireworks in a nearby park or lining up on a parade route. We sure were able to do things a lot differently this 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

Back in March, President Joe Biden predicted our lives would look a lot more normal by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Honestly, I was a bit skeptical when I first heard that. At that point, there was still a limited supply of vaccines available and not all American adults were eligible. Since the spring, President Biden's Administration has worked hard to expand eligibility, manufacture and distribute doses and get more shots in arms.

Thanks to Governor Tony Evers' leadership, Wisconsin has consistently ranked one of the top

states in administering the COVID-19 vaccine. Just last week, the state passed a notable milestone: 50% of Wisconsinites have received at least one vaccine dose! Here in western Wisconsin, residents have showed up to get their shot. More than 50% of residents in Eau Claire and Trempealeau counties have received at least one dose, with neighboring counties closely catching up. This united effort is what it will take to protect our communities and help our state and economy continue to recover.

While more Wisconsinites get vaccinated, it's important that we understand we're still not completely out of the woods yet. COVID-19 variants are emerging and spreading throughout the United States. The Delta variant now [accounts for one in four new cases](#), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). But, the good news from the CDC is that the vaccines "offer protection against most variants spreading in the United States."

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Scientists and public health experts developed the vaccine using medical research that has been around for decades. The vaccines went through all required stages of clinical trials and continue to undergo intensive safety monitoring, [according to the CDC](#). The vaccines have shown to keep people from getting and spreading COVID-19. Every shot administered gets us one step closer to defeating this virus.

Everyone over the age of 12 is now eligible to get their vaccine, and it's easy to make an appointment to get your shot. There are many places you can go to get your free COVID-19 vaccine, including your neighborhood pharmacy, your local health department or your doctor. The easiest place to learn where you can get your vaccine is by visiting [Vaccines.gov](#).

The [WI Dept. of Health Services](#) outlined a number of resources and programs that are offering support to help you get vaccinated. Free child care is available while parents and caregivers are getting vaccinated. Participating businesses are also offering rewards for getting a vaccine and protecting the community.

We have many reasons to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July – Americans' resiliency is just one of them. The last year and a half has been incredibly challenging. We were apart from our friends, family and neighbors for months. We changed our normal routines and missed out on big life events. Many of us lost loved ones. Despite the challenges and tragedy Americans endured, we found ways to persevere. This is what America is all about.



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