COVID-19 Fact Sheet

Additional Vaccine Doses for the Immunocompromised

COVID-19 vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19. People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised (have a weakened immune system) are at increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness and death. Additionally, the immune response to COVID-19 vaccination may not be as strong for those who have weakened immune systems. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends an additional dose of a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine for certain people age 5 years and older who have weakened immune systems caused by medical conditions or therapies. This additional dose is meant to be added to the primary vaccination series to strengthen immune response in recipients who may have had insufficient response to the initial dose(s).

Additional Dose vs. Booster Dose

- **Primary series**: An initial two-dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) or a single dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

- **Additional dose**: A dose to strengthen the initial immune response given after the second dose of Moderna or Pfizer, and the first dose of Johnson & Johnson, to certain people who likely did not have a protective immune response to the initial vaccination.

- **Booster dose**: An extra dose given to people who have received a primary series to restore ongoing protection because immunity wanes over time.

Who Should Get an Additional Dose?

- The additional dose recommendation applies to people with moderate to severe immunosuppression who are at heightened risk for serious outcomes from COVID-19. It is estimated that less than 3% of the U.S. population falls into this category.

- Many conditions and treatments can cause a person to be immunocompromised. People are considered to be moderately or severely immunocompromised if they have:
  - Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood.
  - Received a solid organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system.
  - Received a stem cell (bone marrow) transplant within the last two years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system.
  - Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome).
  - Advanced or untreated HIV infection.
  - Active treatment with any of the following:
    - High-dose corticosteroids.
    - Alkylating agents.
    - Antimetabolites.
    - Transplant-related immunosuppressive drugs.
    - Chemotherapy treatments classified as severely immunosuppressive
    - Tumor necrosis factor (TNF) blockers.

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov
A biologic agent that is immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory.

- If you are unsure whether you should receive an additional dose, contact your doctor for guidance. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best timing of doses based around other treatments you may be receiving.

### Vaccination Schedule for People Who are Immunocompromised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Primary Vaccination Series</th>
<th>Booster dose</th>
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</table>
| Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric formulation | 5 - 11 years          | Three doses  
  - Second dose given three weeks (21 days) after first dose.  
  - Third dose given at least four weeks (28 days) after second dose. | Not authorized for this age group at this time. |
| Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) adult and adolescent formulation | Age 12 years and older | Three doses  
  - Second dose given three weeks (21 days) after first dose.  
  - Third dose given at least four weeks (28 days) after second dose. | One booster dose of Pfizer (12-17) OR any authorized COVID-19 vaccine* (18+) given at least three months after the third dose. |
| Moderna (Spikevax)            | Age 18 years and older | Three doses  
  - Second dose given four weeks (28 days) after first dose.  
  - Third dose given at least four weeks (28 days) after second dose. | One booster dose of any authorized COVID-19 vaccine* given at least three months after the third dose. |
| Johnson & Johnson (Janssen)   | Age 18 years and older | Two doses  
  - First dose: Johnson & Johnson  
  - Second dose: Either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines given at least four weeks (28 days) after the first dose. | One booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) in most situations* given at least two months after the second dose. |

*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends a messenger RNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) for primary vaccination series and booster doses; however, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine can be given in some situations, including a severe reaction after an mRNA vaccine dose or allergies to ingredients in the mRNA vaccines.

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For additional information, visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.