

Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Doses for Adults and Adolescents

A COVID-19 booster shot is an extra dose of the vaccine given after the protection provided by the original shot(s) decreases over time. Another dose can “boost” your immune system’s ability to fight the disease and maintain strong protection from severe illness from COVID-19. While COVID-19 vaccines are incredibly effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19, natural immunity and vaccine immunity wane over time. Boosters can restore protection against serious illness and death from COVID-19, and are effective against Omicron and other variants.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend **a single booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine for people age 12 years and older**. Adolescents and teens age 12-17 years can receive a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Adults can choose any authorized COVID-19 vaccine* for their booster dose.

Millions of Americans age 12 years and older are eligible for COVID-19 booster shots.

- Those who originally received a two-dose series of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine should get a booster five months after their last dose.
- Those who originally received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine should get a booster two months after their last dose.
- Those who are moderately to severely immunocompromised should get an additional dose with their primary vaccination series to strengthen the initial immune response, as well as a booster dose when eligible based on the vaccine dose initially received.

In addition, the FDA and CDC have authorized a **second booster dose for those people who are at the highest risk for severe illness or death from COVID-19**. This authorization gives people who are at increased risk the choice to add another layer of protection.

People who may choose to receive a second booster dose, based on their individual benefits and risks, include:

- People age 50 and older who received an initial mRNA booster dose (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) **at least four months ago MAY RECEIVE a second booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine**. A second booster dose may be most beneficial for people who are age 65 and older, or who are age 50-64 with certain [underlying medical conditions](#).
- People age 12 and older who are [moderately to severely immunocompromised](#) who received an initial mRNA booster dose (Pfizer or Moderna) **at least four months ago MAY RECEIVE a second booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine** (Pfizer, age 12+; Moderna, age 18+). *This means individuals age 12 years and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised may receive as many as five doses – the recommended three-dose primary series for people who are immunocompromised, plus two booster doses.*
- In addition, [based on a newly published CDC report](#), adults who received a **primary vaccine and booster dose of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine at least 4 months ago MAY RECEIVE a second booster dose using an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna)**.

People who are now eligible to receive a second booster dose are encouraged to talk to their healthcare providers to assess individual risks and the benefits of another dose in strengthening ongoing protection.

TERMINOLOGY

Primary series: Generally, 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 third primary series dose given at least four weeks after the initial two doses of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or a dose of an mRNA vaccine given four weeks after a Johnson & Johnson vaccination to people who likely did not have a protective immune response to the initial vaccinations because they are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

Booster dose: A dose given to people who have received a primary series. The intent is to boost immunity because protection is likely to have waned over time. **At this time, booster doses are not recommended for anyone younger than 12 years.**

BOOSTER DOSE ELIGIBILITY AND TIMING

If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine: You should receive a booster dose **two months** after receiving the initial dose. If you received a primary vaccine and booster dose of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine, you may choose to receive **a second booster dose using an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna)** four months after the Johnson & Johnson booster dose.

If you received the Pfizer/Comirnaty (12 or older) or the Moderna vaccine (18 or older): You should receive a booster dose **five months** after receiving the second dose.

- If you are age 50 or older, you **may choose to receive** a second booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine four months after receiving the first booster dose.
- A second booster dose may be most beneficial for people who are age 65 and older, or who are age 50-64 with certain [underlying medical conditions](#).

If you are a moderately to severely **immunocompromised patient age 12 years or older and received an additional (third) dose of Pfizer vaccine:** You should receive a booster (fourth) dose **three months** after receiving the third dose. You may choose to receive a second booster (fifth) dose four months after receiving the first booster dose.

If you are a moderately to severely **immunocompromised patient age 18 or older and received an additional (third) dose of Moderna vaccine:** You should receive a booster (fourth) dose **three months** after receiving the additional (third) dose. You may choose to receive a second booster (fifth) dose four months after receiving the first booster dose.

If you are a moderately to severely **immunocompromised patient age 18 or older and received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and an additional dose of an mRNA vaccine:** You are eligible for a booster (fourth) dose **two months** after receiving the mRNA dose.

MIX-AND-MATCH BOOSTERS

If you are 18 or older, you may choose which vaccine you receive as a booster dose. Some people may prefer the vaccine type that they originally received, and others may prefer to get a different vaccine type. **This mix-and-match approach only applies to additional/booster doses.** If you are age 12-17 years, you must receive the Pfizer vaccine for your booster dose.

** The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) recommends the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines](#) developed by Pfizer and Moderna over the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The recommendation is based upon ongoing evaluations of vaccine effectiveness and safety. Most patients should now consider an mRNA primary vaccine series or booster dose due to the remarkable safety and efficacy of these vaccines. Individuals who are unable to receive an mRNA vaccine or would prefer not to receive an mRNA vaccine will continue to have access to Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine.*

BOOSTER SHOT DOSAGES

- **The Pfizer/Comirnaty booster dose** is the same formulation and dosage given for the primary adult/adolescent series.
- **The Moderna booster dose** is the same formulation given for the primary series, but is a half-dose.
- **The Johnson & Johnson booster dose** is the same formulation and dosage given for the first dose.

More info:

- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers](#)

WHEN AND WHERE TO GET A BOOSTER SHOT

Vaccines are widely available at many locations across the state, including local health departments, pediatricians, family physicians, community health centers, adult and children's hospitals, and pharmacies. Ohioans are encouraged to call their provider for more information or visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634) to locate a provider or make an appointment.

There is no out-of-pocket cost for a COVID-19 vaccine. Your provider may ask for your insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid information because providers can charge an administration fee to insurance. You will not have to pay a fee directly.

Parental consent required: Children younger than age 18 who are not emancipated must have parental or legal guardian consent for any vaccine. A parent or legal guardian generally should accompany the minor to receive the vaccine, unless the administration of the vaccine occurs in a physician's office, school-based or school-associated clinic setting, or similar setting.

For long-term care facility or congregate living residents and staff: Facilities will administer vaccines to residents and staff; specifically, nursing homes and assisted living facilities will use Ohio's COVID-19 Vaccine Maintenance Program, and state-owned institutional settings and veterans homes will vaccinate eligible staff and residents.

Bring your vaccine card: Ohioans are encouraged to bring their existing COVID-19 vaccine card to be updated. If you cannot find your vaccine card, you should first contact your original vaccine provider to ask if they can locate your records. If the provider is unable to assist, please contact your local health department. If the health department is unable to assist, please review this information on [how to mail a request for your vaccination records to the Ohio Department of Health](#). You will not be able to obtain a new vaccine card by request, but will be able to access your vaccination records. If you do not have your original vaccine card, you can still receive your booster dose.

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For additional information, visit 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.