

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

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have authorized booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines for adolescents and adults ages 12 years and older. Authorization allows recipients ages 12-17 years to receive a booster shot of the Pfizer/Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine. Adult recipients (18 years and older) can receive any authorized COVID-19 vaccine.

Boosters can offer added protection against serious outcomes from COVID-19 and maximize ongoing protection against infection, and initial data suggests that boosters help broaden and strengthen protection against Omicron and other variants. COVID-19 vaccines continue to be incredibly effective; however, there is a natural tendency for immunity to wane over time, whether natural immunity or immunity from a vaccine, and many immunizations require at least one booster dose, such as the annual influenza (flu) vaccine.

People who received their initial vaccine series six months ago may now have diminished neutralizing antibodies against COVID-19, including the Omicron variant. Receiving a timely booster dose when you are eligible restores antibody levels and provides significant protection.

Fully vaccinated recipients ages 12-17 years are eligible to receive the Pfizer/Comirnaty vaccine five months after receiving the final dose of the initial vaccination series. Fully vaccinated recipients 18 years and older are eligible to receive a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine of their choice, regardless of the vaccine used for initial vaccination. Dosage and timing of boosters vary based on the chosen vaccine product.

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 after the initial two doses of Pfizer/Comirnaty or Moderna vaccine to people who likely did not have a protective immune response to the initial vaccinations because they are moderately or severely immunocompromised. This additional dose is given at least four weeks after the second dose of the primary series.

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

If you are **12 or older** and received any authorized COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer/Comirnaty, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson.), you are eligible for a booster dose.

Booster dose timing

If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine: You are eligible for a booster dose **two months** after receiving the initial dose.

If you received the Pfizer/Comirnaty or Moderna vaccine and are age 12 years or older: You are eligible for a booster dose **five months** after receiving the second dose.

If you are a moderately to severely immunocompromised patient age 12 years or older and received an additional (third) dose of Pfizer vaccine: You are eligible for a booster (fourth) dose **five months** after receiving the additional (third) dose.

If you are a moderately to severely immunocompromised patient and received an additional (third) dose of Moderna vaccine: You are eligible for a booster (fourth) dose **six months** after receiving the additional (third) 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 have a preference for 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 booster doses.** A primary vaccination series of an mRNA vaccine (i.e., initial two doses of Moderna or Pfizer/Comirnaty) should be completed using the same product. Additional doses for the immunocompromised also should be completed with the same product used in the primary series.

If you are age 12-17years, you must receive the Pfizer/Comirnaty vaccine for your booster dose.

NOTE: The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) has endorsed the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines](#) developed by Pfizer and Moderna over the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The recommendation followed a thorough review of the latest evidence on 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 NOT the same dosage given for the primary series.** The booster dose is a half-dose. Individuals seeking a booster dose should indicate this when scheduling an appointment or walking in, and should bring their COVID-19 vaccine card or vaccine record with them to their appointment (more information below) if possible.
- **The Johnson & Johnson booster dose** is the same dosage given for the first dose.

More info:

- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine EUA 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

There are many opportunities in Ohio to be vaccinated in your community, whether you walk in to get your booster dose or make an appointment with a nearby provider. Vaccination locations include pharmacies, federally qualified health centers, doctor's offices, community vaccination sites, and local health departments. There is ample supply of vaccine for boosters, as well as first and second doses, for Ohioans. Check gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov to find a nearby vaccine provider with the COVID-19 vaccine product needed and to schedule an appointment. You can visit the following types of providers to be vaccinated:

- Most pharmacies offer either walk-in or scheduled appointments.
- Local health departments in some of Ohio's largest cities offer special community vaccination sites, and health departments in virtually every county are prepared to offer booster doses, including to homebound individuals.
- Community health centers and participating primary care providers offer booster doses.
- Some hospital systems or networks offer booster doses.

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.

Updated Jan. 5, 2022.

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.