

FAQs: COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Doses for Adults

Booster doses are now available to all fully vaccinated adults who received one of the three available COVID-19 vaccines in the United States. Here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about COVID-19 vaccine booster doses.

Q: Who is eligible to receive a COVID-19 booster dose?

A: Booster doses are authorized for fully vaccinated Pfizer/Comirnaty, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccine recipients who are **18 years old or older**. Johnson & Johnson recipients are eligible 2 months after their first dose, and Pfizer/Comirnaty or Moderna recipients are eligible six months after their second dose completing the original vaccine series. At this time, booster doses are not recommended for anyone younger than 18 years. However, a [third/additional dose of the Pfizer vaccine is recommended for immunocompromised individuals age 12 and older](#) four weeks after receiving the initial two doses.

Q: When should I get a COVID-19 booster dose?

A: If you received a Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you are eligible for a booster dose two months following the initial dose.

If you received a Pfizer/Comirnaty or Moderna vaccine for your primary series (initial two shots), you are eligible for a booster dose six months after your second shot. If you are an immunocompromised patient who received an additional (third) dose of Pfizer/Comirnaty or Moderna vaccine, you are eligible for a booster dose six months after receiving the additional dose. (This additional dose would have been given at least four weeks after the second dose.)

Q: Can I get a booster dose of a different vaccine than I initially received?

A: Yes. You may choose which vaccine you want to receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type originally received, and others may prefer to get a different booster. CDC's recommendations now allow for this type of mix- and-match dosing for booster shots. For example, if you received your first two doses (both Pfizer/Comirnaty, or both Moderna) at least six months ago and are eligible for a booster, you can now choose any of the three available vaccines for a booster: Pfizer/Comirnaty, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson. If you received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago, you can now choose any of the three available COVID-19 vaccines as a booster: Pfizer/Comirnaty, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson.

This approach does not apply to the primary series. The two-dose primary series should be from the same vaccine product.

Q: Why were some people allowed to get a third COVID-19 dose early?

A: Both the Pfizer and Moderna messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines require two doses for full effectiveness for most people. For a very small percentage of people (approximately 3% of Ohioans and the U.S. population) who are immunocompromised, a third/additional dose of mRNA vaccine is now recommended. This recommendation applies to people who have moderately or severely weakened immune systems and may have insufficient response to a two-dose vaccine regimen. The additional dose is for people with conditions or undergoing treatments that may cause moderate to severe immune system compromise and therefore a weaker initial response. These conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Active treatment for a solid-tumor cancer or a blood, bone marrow, or lymph cancer.
- Receipt of a solid organ transplant and use of related immunosuppressive drugs.
- Receipt within the past two years of a CAR-T-cell transplant or taking related immunosuppressive drugs.
- Receipt within the past two years of a hematopoietic stem cell (bone marrow) transplant or taking related immunosuppressive drugs.
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency.
- Advanced or untreated HIV.
- 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.
 - A biologic agent that is immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory.

At this time, those third/additional doses are recommended for recipients of the messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines (Pfizer/Comirnaty and Moderna).

Q: What's the difference between a "primary series," an "additional" dose, and a "booster" dose?

A: A **primary series** is an initial two-dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) or a single dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine. An **additional dose** is given after an initial primary series to people who likely did not have a protective immune response to the initial vaccination. An additional mRNA COVID-19 vaccine dose is recommended for moderately and severely immunocompromised people who received an mRNA vaccine primary series. A **booster dose** is given to people who have received a primary series. The intent is to boost immunity because protection is likely to have waned over time.

Q: I'm immunocompromised and received an additional dose. Am I also eligible for a booster dose?

A: Yes. If you are 12 years or older and moderately to severely immunocompromised, you can add a third/additional dose to your primary vaccine series at least 28 days following the second dose (12 years or older if you received the Pfizer vaccine; 18 years or older if you received the Moderna vaccine). If you are **18 or older, you also are eligible for a single COVID-19 booster dose (Pfizer/Comirnaty, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson) at least six months after completing their third/additional mRNA vaccine dose.** Currently there is no booster recommendation for individuals under 18 years of age.

Q: If we need booster doses, does this mean the COVID-19 vaccines are no longer effective?

A: No. The COVID-19 vaccines continue to be remarkably effective at reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19, and continue to offer protection against the widely circulating Delta variant. Protection against severe illness and death was the original goal of vaccines. A booster dose could help fully vaccinated people at greater risk maintain the highest protection over time and against variant strains, including the highly contagious Delta variant.

Q: Where can I get a booster dose?

A: With more than 3,700 enrolled COVID-19 vaccine providers in Ohio, there are many opportunities to be vaccinated in your community, whether you walk in to get your booster dose or make an appointment with a nearby provider. Many pharmacies, federally qualified health centers, doctor's offices, community vaccination sites, and local health departments offer booster doses. There is ample supply of vaccine for boosters, as well as first and second doses.

You can visit the following types of providers to be vaccinated:

- **Long-term care facility or congregate living residents and staff** – facilities are administering 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 are vaccinating eligible staff and residents.
- **Other eligible Ohioans not listed above** – eligible Ohioans can find a provider and schedule an appointment at gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov.
 - Most pharmacies offer either walk-in or scheduled appointments.
 - Local health departments in some of our 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 also offer booster doses.
 - Some hospitals and physicians networks offer booster doses.

Q: Do I have to get my booster at the same place where I received the original vaccine series? What if it isn't open anymore?

A: No, you do not need to visit the same vaccine provider for your booster dose. Some providers, such as the Wolstein Center mass vaccination site, will not be in operation for booster doses. Eligible Ohioans who are not being vaccinated in a long-term care or work setting can choose to receive their COVID-19 at any vaccine provider statewide. To find a provider near you, visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-427-5634.

Q: Do I need to bring my COVID-19 vaccine card to my appointment? What if I lost it?

A: 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 see if they can locate your records. If they are unable to assist, please contact your local health department. If they are 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 card, you can still get your booster dose.

Q: Are booster doses for the Pfizer or the Comirnaty vaccine?

A: Comirnaty is another name for the fully approved Pfizer vaccine. They are two names for the same product.

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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.