



## COVID-19

# COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots

Updated Nov. 9, 2021

## Some COVID-19 Vaccine Recipients Can Get Booster Shots

- People who received a primary mRNA COVID-19 vaccine series and are 65 years and older, 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions, or 18 years and older who live in long-term care settings **should** receive a booster shot at least 6 months after completing the primary series (which may include an additional primary dose in persons with moderate to severe immunocompromise).
- People who received a primary mRNA COVID-19 vaccine series and are 18–49 years old with underlying medical conditions, or 18 years and older who work or live in high-risk settings **may** receive a booster shot at least 6 months after completing the primary series (which may include an additional primary dose in persons with moderate to severe immunocompromise).
- People who received the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine and are 18 years and older **should** receive a booster shot at least 2 months after receiving their primary vaccine dose.

### IF YOU RECEIVED

#### Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna

##### You are eligible for a booster if you are:

- [65 years or older](#)
- Age 18+ who live in [long-term care settings](#)
- Age 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](#)
- Age 18+ who work or live in [high-risk settings](#)

##### When to get a booster:

At least 6 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series

##### Which booster should you get?

[Any of the COVID-19 vaccines](#) authorized in the United States

### IF YOU RECEIVED

#### Johnson & Johnson's Janssen

##### You are eligible for a booster if you are: [18 years or older](#)

##### When to get a booster:

At least 2 months after your shot

##### Which booster should you get?

[Any of the COVID-19 vaccines](#) authorized in the United States

## Choosing Your COVID-19 Booster Shot

You may choose which COVID-19 vaccine you receive as a booster shot. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type that they 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.

Learn how you can [find a COVID-19 vaccine near you](#).

IF YOU RECEIVED

## Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine

### Older adults age 65 years and older

People ages 65 years and older **should** get a booster shot. The risk of severe illness from COVID-19 [increases with age](#) and can also increase for adults of any age with underlying medical conditions.

### Long-term care setting residents ages 18 years and older

Residents ages 18 years and older of long-term care settings **should** get a booster shot. Because residents in [long-term care settings](#) live closely together in group settings and are often older adults with underlying medical conditions, they are at increased risk of infection and severe illness from COVID-19.

### People with underlying medical conditions ages 50–64 years

People ages 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions **should** get a booster shot. The risk of severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age and can also increase for adults of any age with [underlying medical conditions](#).

### People with underlying medical conditions ages 18–49 years

People ages 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions **may** get a booster shot based on their individual risks and benefits. The risk of severe illness from COVID-19 can increase for adults of any age with [underlying medical conditions](#). This recommendation may change in the future as more data become available.

### People who work or live in high-risk settings ages 18–64 years

People ages 18–64 years at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of [occupational or institutional setting](#) **may** get a booster shot based on their individual risks and benefits. Adults who work or reside in certain settings (e.g., health care, schools, correctional facilities, homeless shelters) may be at increased risk of being exposed to COVID-19, which could be spreading where they work or reside. That risk can vary across settings and be affected by how much COVID-19 is spreading in a community. This recommendation may change in the future as more data become available.

Examples of workers who may get COVID-19 booster shots: <sup>[1]</sup>

- First responders (e.g., healthcare workers, firefighters, police, congregate care staff)
- Education staff (e.g., teachers, support staff, daycare workers)
- Food and agriculture workers
- Manufacturing workers
- Corrections workers
- U.S. Postal Service workers
- Public transit workers
- Grocery store workers

<sup>1</sup> List could be updated in the future.

IF YOU RECEIVED

## J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine

People ages 18 years and older who received a J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine at least 2 months ago **should** get a booster shot. A single dose of the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine has lower vaccine effectiveness compared to two doses.

## Your Vaccination Card and Booster Shots

At your first vaccination appointment, you should have received a [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card](#) that tells you what COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where you received it. Bring this vaccination card to your booster shot vaccination appointment.

If you did not receive a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card at your first appointment, contact the vaccination site where you got your first shot or your [state health department](#) to find out how you can get a card.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Are booster shots the same formulation as existing vaccines?

Yes. COVID-19 booster shots are the same formulation as the current COVID-19 vaccines. However, in the case of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine booster shot, it is half the dose of the vaccine people get for their initial series.

### If we need a booster shot, are the vaccines working?

Yes. [COVID-19 vaccines are working well](#) to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating [Delta variant](#). However, public health experts are starting to see reduced protection, especially among certain populations, against mild and moderate disease.

### What are the risks to getting a booster shot?

So far, [reactions reported](#) [707 KB, 24 pages] after getting a booster shot were similar to that of the 2-shot or single-dose initial series. Fever, headache, fatigue and pain at the injection site were the most commonly reported side effects, and overall, most side effects were mild to moderate. However, as with the 2-shot or single-dose initial series, [serious side effects are rare](#), but may occur.

### Am I still considered “fully vaccinated” if I don’t get a booster shot?

Yes. Everyone is still considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a 2-shot series, such as the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the J&J/Janssen vaccine.

### When can I get a COVID-19 booster shot if I am NOT in one of the recommended groups?

Additional populations may be recommended to receive a booster shot as more data become available. The [COVID-19 vaccines approved and authorized in the United States](#) continue to be [effective](#) at reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. Experts are looking at all available data to understand how well the vaccines are working for different populations. This includes looking at how new variants, like Delta, affect vaccine effectiveness.

## Data Supporting Need for a Booster Shot

Studies show after getting vaccinated against COVID-19, protection against the virus and the ability to prevent infection with the Delta variant may decrease over time.

Although COVID-19 vaccination for adults ages 65 years and older remains effective in preventing severe disease, [recent data](#) [5 MB, 88 pages] suggest vaccination is less effective at preventing infection or milder illness with symptoms over time.

- Emerging evidence also shows that among healthcare and other frontline workers, vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 infections is also decreasing over time.
- This lower effectiveness is likely due to the combination of decreasing protection as time passes since getting vaccinated, as well as the greater infectiousness of the Delta variant.

Data from small clinical trials show that a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna **booster shot increased the immune response** in trial participants who finished their initial series 6 months earlier. A similar clinical trial showed that a J&J/Janssen booster shot also **increased the immune response** in participants who completed their single-dose vaccine at least 2 months earlier. With an increased immune response, people should have improved protection against COVID-19, including the Delta variant.

## Related Pages

- › [Understanding How COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#)
- › [Ensuring COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#)
- › [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- › [Examples of Workers Who May Get Pfizer-BioNTech Booster Shots](#)
- › [COVID-19 Vaccines for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People](#)



## For Healthcare and Public Health Considerations for Use of a COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Dose

## More Information

[ACIP Presentation Slides, October 21, 2021](#)

[ACIP Presentation Slides, September 22–23, 2021](#)

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