



COVID-19

COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots

Updated Nov. 19, 2021

NEW

People age 18 years and older who received Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines **may** get a booster.

Everyone Ages 18 and Older Can Get a Booster Shot

IF YOU RECEIVED

Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna

You **should** get a booster if you are:

- Ages 50 years and older
- Ages 18 years and older and live in a [long-term care setting](#)

You **may** get a booster if you are:

- Ages 18 years and older

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 **should** get 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 can be used for the booster dose.

Choosing Your COVID-19 Booster Shot

You may choose which COVID-19 vaccine you receive as a booster shot. Some people may prefer 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.

Scheduling Your Booster Shot

If you need help scheduling your booster shot, contact the location that set up your previous appointment. If you need to get your booster shot in a location different from where you received your previous shot, there are several ways you can [find a vaccine provider](#).

IF YOU RECEIVED

Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines

Adults ages 50 years and older

People ages 50 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.

Other people who are age 18 years and older

People who are ages 18 years and older **may** get a booster shot based on their individual risks and benefits. This recommendation may change in the future as more data become available.

IF YOU RECEIVED

J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine

All 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, for a total of two shots. A single dose of the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine has lower vaccine effectiveness compared to two doses.

What to Expect during and after Your Booster Shot Appointment

- Bring [your CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record card](#) to your booster shot appointment so your provider can fill in the information about your booster dose. If you did not receive a 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.
- You may experience [side effects](#) after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. These are normal signs that your body is building protection against COVID-19.
- Use [v-safe](#) to tell CDC about any side effects. If you [enter your booster shot](#) in your **v-safe** account, the system will send you daily health check-ins.

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 primary 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 after getting a booster shot were similar to those of the two-shot or single-dose primary series. You can use [v-safe](#) to tell CDC about any side effects. If you [enter your booster shot](#) in your v-

safe account, the system will send you daily health check-ins. 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 two-shot or single-dose primary 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 two-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.

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 older adults remains effective in preventing severe disease, recent data 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 infection 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 vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 infection is waning after the primary series, but protection remains high against severe disease and hospitalization. Clinical trial data show a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine is effective in protecting against COVID-19, adding to other evidence demonstrating that a booster shot may result in increased effectiveness compared to primary vaccination.

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, November 19, 2021](#)

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

