



COVID-19

COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots

Updated Nov. 29, 2021

NEW Everyone ages 18 and older should get a booster shot

Everyone Ages 18 and Older Should Get a Booster Shot

IF YOU RECEIVED

Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna

Who should get a booster:
Everyone 18 years or 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

Who should get a booster:
Everyone 18 years or older

When to get a booster:
At least 2 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination.

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 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](#).

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 variants may decrease over time.

Although COVID-19 vaccination remains effective in preventing severe disease, [recent data](#)  [\[1 MB, 68 pages\]](#) suggest vaccination becomes less effective over time, especially in people aged 65 and older and at preventing infection or milder illness with symptoms.

- The recent emergence of the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529) further emphasizes the importance of vaccination, boosters, and prevention efforts needed to protect against COVID-19. Early data from South Africa suggest increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant and the potential for immune evasion.
- 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 clinical trials showed that a booster shot increased the immune response in trial participants who finished a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna primary series 6 months earlier or who received a J&J/Janssen single-dose vaccine 2 months earlier. With an increased immune response, people should have improved protection against COVID-19, including the Delta variant. For Pfizer-BioNTech and J&J/Janssen, clinical trials also showed that a booster shot helped prevent COVID-19 with symptoms.

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](#)

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

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