



COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Frequently Asked Questions

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Q: Am I eligible for a booster?

A: According to the latest CDC guidelines, people who received their second shot of Pfizer or Moderna at least six months ago should get a booster if they fall into one of these categories:

- 65 years and 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

For those who received the one-dose Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine, a booster shot is recommended for everyone 18 and older at least 2 months after receiving their original dose.

Q: What is the difference between a booster and a third dose?

Booster shots are given when an original vaccine's effectiveness may start to weaken, while a third or additional dose might be offered to those who are not expected to have had a strong enough immune response to their initial vaccination due to certain conditions. Consult your health care provider to learn which might be right for you.

Q: Do I need to get the same booster as my original COVID-19 vaccine?

A: The CDC's recommendations now allow for mix and match dosing for booster shots. Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may prefer the vaccine type that they originally received, and others may prefer to get a different booster. The biggest benefit of mixing and matching is that it gives people options to get their booster as soon as possible.

Q: What are the expected side effects?

A: Side effects are expected to be similar to initial vaccination and can include pain at the injection site, fatigue, muscle pain, headache and fever.

Q: Where will boosters be available?

A: For those eligible, booster shots will be available at both provider's offices and pharmacies. If you are unable to get the booster at your original vaccine location, [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) can provide information about vaccination services in your area. You can also text your zip code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you in the U.S.

The Maine CDC currently lists vaccination sites offering additional doses of Pfizer vaccine at: www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/vaccination-sites. This list will be updated soon to include Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

Q: Do boosters mean the vaccines aren't working?

A: No, the availability of boosters does not mean the original vaccines aren't working. The effectiveness of most vaccines lessens over time and boosters are often used in routine vaccination to maintain peak immunity.

All the data suggests that the vaccines have dramatically reduced the risk of contracting the virus, spreading the virus, and most importantly, of being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19.

Q: Will booster shots be the same formulation as existing vaccines?

A: 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.

Q: Do I need to bring my vaccination card to get the booster?

A: It is helpful to bring proof of your original vaccination with you when you get a booster so your provider can update your vaccination card.

Q: Do I have to get a booster to be considered fully vaccinated?

A: No. At this time, people are still considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna or two weeks after a single dose Johnson & Johnson.