



COVID-19 Booster Dose FAQs

(Updated 10-25-2022)

Q: Are booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine recommended?

Yes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone **age 5 and older**, including people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised and received an additional dose in their primary vaccination series, receive a booster dose once they're eligible:

A single bivalent (updated vaccine formula) mRNA booster dose at least two months after completion of any primary authorized vaccine series (Moderna, Novavax, Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson) OR A single bivalent mRNA booster dose at least two months after your most recent monovalent (original vaccine formula) booster dose. Five-year-old children are eligible to receive only the Pfizer bivalent booster; anyone 6 years of age or older may receive either the Pfizer or the Moderna bivalent booster.

- Children under 12 receive pediatric doses.
- Booster doses are not recommended at this time for children 6 months through 4 years old.

Q: What is a bivalent vaccine?

A bivalent vaccine targets two things, in this case two strains of the virus that causes COVID-19. The bivalent COVID-19 booster dose contains components of mRNA from both the original strain of the virus that causes COVID-19 and from the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron variants, which have identical "spike" proteins. The original monovalent vaccine targeted only one antigen: it contained mRNA for the spike protein in the original strain of the virus. The bivalent booster dose induces antibodies that better fight strains of the virus circulating today. It maintains components of the original virus in order to offer protection against a wider range of viral strains. At this time the Moderna version of the bivalent booster dose is available only to people 6 years of age and older. The Pfizer version of the updated booster dose is available to people ages 5 and older. Bivalent booster doses are not available to children under 5 at this time. The bivalent boosters are not authorized to be used in a primary vaccination series.

Q. Is there a waiting period after getting a booster dose?

Yes. People should be monitored for immediate side effects for 15–30 minutes after vaccination.

Q. Where can people get a booster dose?

Bivalent booster doses are widely available through pharmacies, doctors' offices and clinics, as monovalent COVID-19 vaccines for the primary series are today. Use the [vaccine locator map](#) to find a vaccine provider near you, or call 211 or 866-698-6155 for information and assistance in any language. Proof of eligibility is not required, though providers may ask for confirmation of your last dose.

Q. How do booster doses work?

The primary vaccine series builds up the immune system to make the antibodies needed to fight the disease. Over time, the immune response weakens. A booster dose builds on the initial response and tends to result in higher antibody levels that help people maintain their immunity longer. The bivalent booster dose adds better protection against more recently circulating strains of the virus.

Q: Should someone who is eligible for an additional dose and a booster get both?

Yes. An additional dose is recommended for people who are immunocompromised and who therefore may not have developed a strong immune response to their primary vaccine series. (Additional doses are not recommended to children ages 6 months through 4 years old who received Pfizer, which is already a three-dose primary vaccine series.)

Because immunity wanes after the primary series, a booster dose is recommended to all people 5 and older at least two months after completion of their primary series (includes additional dose) OR at least two months after their most recent monovalent (original vaccine formula booster dose. Children ages 6 months through 4 years old are not recommended to receive a booster dose at this time.

The Pfizer bivalent booster dose is available to people ages 5 and older. The Moderna bivalent booster is available to people ages 6 and older.

Johnson & Johnson recipients: People who are immunocompromised and received a dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine as their primary series should receive an additional dose of an mRNA monovalent (original vaccine formula) vaccine at least 28 days after their initial dose. Then they should get a bivalent (updated vaccine formula) booster dose at least two months later to increase their immunity, with and to acquire protection from more recently circulating viral strains.

If people who are immunocompromised and received Johnson & Johnson got a booster dose *before* their additional dose, they should receive an additional dose of a monovalent mRNA vaccine two months after their booster dose. An immunocompromised person who received their doses in this order should receive a booster dose of an updated bivalent mRNA vaccine at least two months after their most recent monovalent dose.

Q: What do providers need to know about safety and reporting after administering a booster dose?

Providers should monitor for adverse events, including local and systemic reactions. Providers are encouraged to report any adverse reactions to the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting Database (VAERS). <https://vaers.hhs.gov>

Q: I received one dose of Moderna and one dose of Pfizer. Which updated booster dose should I get?

People 6 years of age and over who received a mixed-dose primary series can receive either a Pfizer or a Moderna bivalent booster. Five-year-old children who received a mixed-dose primary series may receive only the Pfizer bivalent booster.

Q: I received Johnson & Johnson. If I get a Pfizer or Moderna booster, do I need two doses?

No. A booster dose is a single dose for all three vaccines, so you only need one additional dose of vaccine after your Johnson & Johnson primary vaccine: an updated bivalent Pfizer or Moderna booster.

Q: Does a parent or guardian need to accompany a 15–17-year-old to receive their booster dose?

No. Under Oregon law, minors 15 and older may give consent to receive medical treatment, including vaccinations, when provided by a physician, physician assistant, naturopath, nurse practitioner, dentist or optometrist, or other professionals operating under the license of these providers.

Q: Do people need to provide proof of vaccination to get a booster dose?

No. However, your provider may ask when you received your last vaccination, as administration should be within the authorized time period. All vaccinators should check the ALERT system to determine if the timing is appropriate.

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