Boosters for 18+ Fast Facts

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone age 18 and older receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose.

In response to the emergence of the Omicron variant in several countries, the CDC strengthened its recommendation on Nov. 29, 2021, that everyone 18 and over get a booster dose when they are eligible: six months after the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna, or two months after a Johnson & Johnson dose. This includes people who are immunocompromised and may have received a third dose of Pfizer or Moderna.

Even people at low risk of serious illness from COVID-19 should get a booster to protect themselves and others.
A booster will re-build neutralizing antibodies that strengthen the body’s ability to fight getting a breakthrough case. Even if you’re not at high risk for severe disease, you could be infected and then pass it on to others, such as children too young to be vaccinated, the elderly, or people who are immunocompromised.

Booster doses help people maintain strong immunity to disease longer.
The first vaccine series built 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.

Boosters take about two weeks to bring up the immune response.
This continues to be studied, but we can reliably say it that after two weeks immunity is equal to or better than that after the primary series.

After getting a booster dose, you should be monitored for 15–30 minutes.
As with your primary doses, you should be monitored for immediate side effects for 15–30 minutes after vaccination.
**Booster doses are widely available, but you may need to wait.**

Booster doses are widely available through pharmacies, doctor’s offices and clinics, as COVID-19 vaccine is 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 written confirmation of your last vaccination. Please be patient. Vaccine providers are working hard to meet the need, as they have done throughout the pandemic.

**Booster doses are safe, effective and free.**

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