



## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding COVID-19 Boosters and Additional Doses

In August, CDC recommended third doses of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines be administered to people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised. Last week, CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, M.D., M.P.H., endorsed the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation for a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in certain populations and also recommended a booster dose for those in high risk occupational and institutional settings.

This updated interim guidance from CDC for both third doses and booster doses allows for millions of Americans who are at highest risk for COVID-19 to boost their protection against infection and disease.

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

**A:** A booster dose is given to certain populations who completed their primary series of Pfizer vaccine and are expected to have had a strong immune response but may have waning immunity over time. A third dose in the primary mRNA series is recommended for people with immunocompromising conditions who may not have had a robust immune response from two doses of vaccine. The main differences are:

- Who qualifies for it (list of conditions below)
- Which vaccines are authorized
  - Third dose for immunocompromised is authorized for both Moderna and Pfizer
  - Booster doses for those who qualify is authorized only for Pfizer
- When you can get it
  - Third doses for immunocompromised are administered at least 28 days after the second dose of Moderna or Pfizer
  - Booster doses for those who qualify are administered at least six months after the second dose of Pfizer

### Q: Who can get a booster dose?

**A:** Anyone who previously received the Pfizer vaccine **and** who falls in one of the categories below can receive a booster dose, as long as it has been at least six months since the second dose:

- Anyone 65 years old and older
- Anyone who lives in a long-term care facility who is at least 18 years old
- Anyone age 18-64 who has one of the following conditions:
  - Overweight or obesity
  - Diabetes
  - Long term (chronic) Kidney disease
  - High blood pressure
  - Long term lung disease like COPD
  - Dementia
  - Down's syndrome
  - Heart conditions

- HIV
- A weakened immune system
- Liver disease
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- History of organ transplant
- History of smoking
- Stroke
- Substance use disorder
- Anyone age 18-64 who is at high risk for COVID-19 exposure due to their job as a:
  - First responder (healthcare workers, firefighters, police, congregate care staff)
  - Education staff (teachers, support staff, daycare worker)
  - Food and agriculture worker
  - Manufacturing worker
  - Corrections worker
  - U.S. Postal Service worker
  - Public transit worker
  - Grocery store worker

**Q: Who can receive a third dose?**

**A:** Anyone who received either Pfizer or Moderna (not J&J) for their first two doses **and** who has a weakened immune system (see list of qualifying conditions below) can get a third dose at least 28 days after receiving the second dose. This is not considered a booster. Qualifying conditions include:

- Receiving active cancer treatment for solid tumors or cancers of the blood
- Receiving an organ transplant and taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress the immune response

**Q: Is a note or order needed from a medical provider to get either the third dose or the booster?**

**A:** No. An individual can self-attest that they have a qualifying condition for either the third dose or booster. **In order to minimize barriers, individuals should attest to having one of the qualifying conditions rather than being asked to specify which condition at a vaccine clinic.**

**Q: Can flu and COVID vaccines be administered at the same time?**

**A:** Yes, as of May 2021, the CDC has [recommended](#) that COVID-19 vaccines may be administered without regard to timing of other vaccines. Time-sensitive vaccines such as the flu vaccine should not be delayed in the context of COVID-19 vaccine or vice versa.

**Q: Where can individuals receive third doses or booster doses?**

**A:** Individuals may contact their healthcare provider or visit [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov) to find a nearby location to receive a booster dose or third dose.