

CDC COVID-19 BOOSTER SHOT KEY MESSAGES

OVERARCHING MESSAGES

- **Millions of Americans are now eligible for booster shots.**
 - For Pfizer & Moderna primary series: People who are age 65 years and older and people who live in long-term care settings, have underlying health conditions, or work or live in high-risk settings, starting at least 6 months after their 2nd shot.
 - For J&J single dose: Everyone 18 years and older who received a J&J vaccine at least 2 months ago.
- **We are focused on staying ahead of the virus by making sure people have optimal protection against COVID-19 infection, severe illness, and death.**
 - We also have robust safety data on boosters and third doses that have already been administered here and in other countries.
- **We are following the science.**
 - FDA and CDC have determined these booster shots are safe and effective, based on the latest data and evidence, after a thorough, independent, and transparent review process.
 - FDA and CDC will continue to evaluate data as it is available to determine when other groups of people may become eligible for booster shots.

KEY MESSAGES

- Today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended the use of booster shots for recipients of Moderna and J&J's COVID-19 vaccines.
- Now, people in the following groups are eligible to receive a booster shot at least 6 months after completion of their mRNA primary series:
 - 65 years and older
 - Age 18+ who live in long-term care settings
 - Age 18+ who have underlying medical conditions
 - Age 18+ who live or work in high-risk settings
- Additionally, booster shots are recommended for everyone 18 and older at least 2 months after receiving their J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.
- Today's recommendations mean everyone in these groups, regardless of what vaccine they initially received, are eligible to get a COVID-19 booster shot.
- ACIP's recommendation follows the decision by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to [expand the use of a booster dose for COVID-19 vaccines](#) in eligible populations, including allowing the use of Moderna and J&J COVID-19 vaccine booster shots.
- This recommendation applies to millions of U.S. adults and focuses on people who are at increased risk of COVID-19 and possible severe complications because of their age and where they work or live.
- We are focused on staying ahead of the virus by making sure people have the most protection against COVID-19 infection, severe illness, and death and we have robust safety data on boosters and third doses that have already been administered here and in other countries.
- ACIP's decision followed a careful examination of the latest data, and robust and deliberative discussion around boosters.
 - [Safety] CDC data demonstrate the safety of 3rd COVID-19 vaccine doses. Side effects, which are expected with vaccination, were similar to those from 2nd vaccine doses, and were mostly mild, moderate, and short-lived.
 - [Vaccine effectiveness] Data show that administration of a booster shot may result in increases in antibody levels and may result in increased effectiveness compared to primary vaccination.

- We will continue to evaluate available data and make determinations for additional populations.
- The primary series of mRNA vaccines are still effective in providing protection against severe disease, hospitalization, and death.
- CDC and ACIP also emphasized that the nation’s priority should remain getting everyone fully vaccinated with their primary series; there are approximately 65 million Americans who are still unvaccinated and at the highest risk of severe disease and death. Nearly all the cases of severe disease, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 continue to occur among those not yet vaccinated.
 - According to a [recent MMWR](#), even during times when the Delta variant was circulating widely, the COVID-19 vaccines provided stable and strong protection against hospitalization and death.
 - For example, people who were not fully vaccinated were over 10 times more likely to be hospitalized and 11 times more likely to die compared with fully vaccinated people.
- For those eligible, getting a booster shot is convenient, and as simple as visiting your local pharmacy or doctor’s office.
 - Additionally, if a patient is eligible, both flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same visit.
 - A COVID-19 vaccine can be given with other vaccines, such as shingles and pneumonia, as well.
- Vaccines.gov can make the process easier. This free resource provides accurate and up-to-date 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.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Who is eligible to get a booster?

A: For individuals who received a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, the following groups are eligible for a booster shot at 6 months or more after their initial series:

- 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 the people who got the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, booster shots are also recommended for those who are 18 and older and were vaccinated two or more months ago.

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: Can people mix and match vaccine brands for their booster shot?

A: Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for 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. If you have lost your CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record card or don’t have a copy, contact your vaccination provider directly to access your vaccination record. Additional information about your COVID-19 vaccine record can be found [here](#).

Q: Will the booster shot also be free?

A: COVID-19 vaccines are available for everyone at no cost, including the booster shot. Vaccines will continue to be given to all people living in the United States, regardless of insurance or immigration status.

Q: Will providers accept anyone who says they're eligible to receive a booster shot? Will people need to show a doctor's note/prescription or other documentation?

A: Individuals can self-report that they are eligible and receive a booster shot wherever vaccines are offered. This will help ensure there are not additional barriers to access for this vulnerable population receiving their booster shot.

Q: Does this change the definition of "fully vaccinated" for those eligible for booster shots?

A: No. At this time, people are still considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the J&J/Janssen vaccine.

Q: Where will boosters be available?

A: For those eligible, getting a booster shot is convenient, and as simple as visiting your local pharmacy or doctor's office. If you are unable to get the booster at your original vaccine location, [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) can make the process easier. This free resource provides accurate and up-to-date 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.

Q: Is it safe to co-administer COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines, like flu?

A: Yes, if a patient is eligible, both flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same visit, as [recommended by CDC and ACIP](#). In addition to flu vaccine, COVID-19 vaccine can be given with other vaccines as well.