



## COVID-19

We have the tools to  
**Fight Omicron**



Vaccines & Booster



Masks



Testing

# COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots

Updated Feb. 2, 2022

## Choosing Your COVID-19 Booster Shot

Three COVID-19 vaccines are authorized or approved for use in the United States to prevent COVID-19. Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (COVID-19 mRNA vaccines) are preferred. You may get Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine [in some situations](#).

## Who Can Get a Booster Shot

IF YOU RECEIVED

### Pfizer-BioNTech

**Who should get a booster:**

Everyone 12 years and older

**When to get a booster:**

At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series

**Which booster should you get?**

Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most\* situations

Teens 12–17 years old may only get a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster

IF YOU RECEIVED

### Moderna

**Who should get a booster:**

Adults 18 years and older

**When to get a booster:**

At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series

**Which booster should you get?**

Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most\* situations

IF YOU RECEIVED

## Johnson & Johnson's Janssen\*

### Who should get a booster:

Adults 18 years and older

### When to get a booster:

At least 2 months after receiving your J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccination

### Which booster should you get?

Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most\* situations

\*Although mRNA vaccines are preferred, J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine [may be considered in some situations](#).

## Scheduling Your Booster Shot

If you need help scheduling your booster shot, contact the location that set up your previous appointment. If you need to get your booster shot in a location different from where you received your previous shot, there are several ways you can [find a vaccine provider](#).

**Find a COVID-19 vaccine or booster:** Search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you.

## What to Expect during and after Your Booster Shot Appointment

- – Bring [your CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record card](#) to your booster shot appointment so your provider can fill in the information about your booster dose. If you did not receive a card at your first appointment, contact the vaccination site where you got your first shot or your [state health department](#) to find out how you can get a card.
- You may experience [side effects](#) after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. These are normal signs that your body is building protection against COVID-19.
- If you have enrolled in [v-safe](#), [enter your booster shot](#) in your [v-safe](#) account, the system will send you daily health check-ins. You will be able to tell CDC about any side effects.
- A person is considered “boosted” and [up to date](#) right after getting their booster dose.

## If You Were Vaccinated Outside of the United States

If you completed a Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine primary series outside of the United States you should follow the guidance above for booster shots.

Otherwise, if you were vaccinated abroad with other COVID-19 vaccines you can get a booster shot if you are 12 years or older and you either:

- Received all the recommended doses of a [World Health Organization emergency use listing \(WHO-EUL\) COVID-19 vaccine](#) [🔗](#), not approved or authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Or completed a mix and match series composed of any combination of [FDA-approved](#), [FDA-authorized](#), or [WHO-EUL COVID-19 vaccines](#)

If you meet the above requirements you can get a single booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at least 5 months after getting all recommended doses or completing a mix and match COVID-19 vaccine series.

# Frequently Asked Questions

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Do booster shots use the same ingredients as existing vaccines? ∨

Yes. COVID-19 booster shots are the same ingredients (formulation) as the current COVID-19 vaccines. However, in the case of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine booster shot, the dose is half of the amount of the vaccine people get for their primary series.

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If we need a booster shot, are the vaccines working? ∨

Yes. [COVID-19 vaccines are working well](#) to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death. However, public health experts are starting to see reduced protection over time against mild and moderate disease, especially among certain populations.

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What are the risks to getting a booster shot? ∨

Adults and children may have some side effects from a COVID-19 vaccine, including pain, redness or swelling at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever and nausea. [Serious side effects are rare](#), but may occur.

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Am I still considered “fully vaccinated” if I don’t get a booster shot? ∨

Yes, the definition of fully vaccinated has not changed and does not include the booster shot. Everyone is still considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a two-shot series, such as the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the J&J/Janssen vaccine. Fully vaccinated, however is not the same as optimally protected. To be optimally protected, a person needs to get a booster shot when and if eligible.

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Does the definition of “up to date” include a booster shot? ∨

It depends. Everyone is considered up to date until the time they are eligible for a booster – which is 5 months after the second dose in a two-shot series, (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines), or two months after the J&J/Janssen vaccine. After this time period, a booster shot is recommended and a person is no longer up to date on their recommended COVID vaccination. In order to be up to date, a person would need to get a booster shot to be considered up to date.

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## Data Supporting Need for a Booster Shot

Studies show after getting vaccinated against COVID-19, protection against the virus and the ability to prevent infection with variants may decrease over time and due to changes in variants.

- Although COVID-19 vaccines remain effective in preventing severe disease, [recent data](#)  [\[1 MB, 68 pages\]](#) suggest their effectiveness at preventing infection or severe illness wanes over time, especially in people ages 65 years and older.
- The recent emergence of the Omicron variant further emphasizes the importance of vaccination, boosters, and prevention efforts needed to protect against COVID-19.
- Data from clinical trials showed that a booster shot increased the immune response in trial participants who finished a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna primary series 6 months earlier or who received a J&J/Janssen single-dose vaccine 2 months earlier. With an increased immune response, people should have improved protection against getting infected with

COVID-19. For Pfizer-BioNTech and J&J/Janssen, clinical trials also showed that a booster shot helped prevent severe disease.

## Related Pages

- › [COVID-19 Vaccine Safety and Monitoring](#)
- › [Understanding How COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#)
- › [Ensuring COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#)
- › [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- › [COVID-19 Vaccines for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People](#)



### For Healthcare and Public Health

[Considerations for Use of a COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Dose](#)

## More Information

[ACIP Presentation Slides, December 16, 2021](#)

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[ACIP Presentation Slides, November 19, 2021](#)

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[ACIP Presentation Slides, October 21, 2021](#)

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[ACIP Presentation Slides, September 22–23, 2021](#)

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