

COVID-19 Booster Shot Fact Sheet

November 30, 2021

1. Why are boosters needed? (What is the data that supports booster shots?)

- 1) Studies from Israel and the CDC show that 6 months after the second COVID-19 mRNA vaccination dose, our protection from COVID-19 is decreased and breakthrough infections are more common.
- 2) People over age 65 are at greater risk for breakthrough cases and complications from COVID-19 infections after 6 months from their initial mRNA vaccination.
- 3) The vaccine remains highly effective at preventing hospitalizations and deaths.
- 4) An Israeli study shows that after a booster shot, the risk of a COVID-19 infection decreases by ten-fold.
- 5) Booster shots are used for other common vaccinations, such as the hepatitis B and HPV vaccines.

2. Who is currently eligible for a COVID-19 booster shot?

- 1) Immunocompromised patients can get a “3rd shot” of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, as they often do not make enough antibodies to be protected after only two doses of the vaccine. Note: This “3rd shot” is different than a booster shot, where the person was adequately protected after their first two vaccine doses.
- 2) **The FDA and CDC have agreed that COVID-19 vaccine booster shots are safe and appropriate for ALL ADULTS who have received their Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccine and completed their initial series at least 6 months ago.**
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html?s_cid=11710:covid%20booster%20immunocompromised:sem.ga:p:RG:GM:gen:PTN.Grants:FY22
- 3) The FDA and CDC also recommend a booster shot for anyone who has received a Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine more than 2 months ago.
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html?s_cid=11708:65%20and%20older%20covid%20booster:sem.ga:p:RG:GM:gen:PTN.Grants:FY22

3. What about mixing and matching different COVID-19 vaccines?

Mixing different COVID-19 vaccines can be done with any of the COVID-19 vaccines as per the CDC and FDA recommendations.

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4. Are the COVID-19 vaccine booster shots safe?

- 1) The data on booster shots for the all COVID-19 vaccines shows they are very safe.
- 2) As stated in the CDC publication dated October 1, 2021, there are no new safety concerns related to the Pfizer or Moderna booster shots. There only remains a small risk of myocarditis and pericarditis with the vaccine.

Source for safety evaluation of booster shots:

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7039e4.htm>

5. What are the expected side effects of the booster shot compared to the first two shots of either of the mRNA COVID 19-vaccines?

- 1) The side effects are very similar to those experienced by many people after the second dose of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine shots. If you were tired or had a fever after the second shot, you should expect that can also happen after you receive the booster shot.
- 2) Most common side effects are:
 - a) Sore arm
 - b) Fatigue
 - c) Headache
 - d) Fever
- 3) The side effects usually last just one day.
- 4) 77.6% and 76.5% reported local or systemic reactions, respectively, after the second dose; 79.4% and 74.1% reported local or systemic reactions, respectively, after the third dose.

6. Do you need a booster shot if you have had a COVID-19 infection?

Yes! Studies have shown that protection after a COVID-19 infection is not as strong as after a vaccine dose, and you have a 2.3 times greater risk of getting another COVID-19 infection without full vaccination.

7. Will we need more boosters after this one, such as yearly boosters?

- 1) We do not know yet if additional boosters will be necessary.
- 2) We are continuing to learn how long our protection will last.
- 3) We are also witnessing the scientific process at work and can expect recommendations to change as we learn more.