COVID-19 Booster Shot Recommendations

A booster shot is recommended for people ages 16 or older who received their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least six months ago, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago. People who were vaccinated outside of the U.S. with a different COVID-19 vaccine may also be eligible for a booster.

What is a booster shot?
A booster shot is an additional dose of a vaccine to provide added protection.

Why is a booster shot being recommended?
The vaccines are still very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death due to COVID-19. However, there is growing evidence that protection against mild to moderate infection is not as strong, and that protection may decrease over time.

A booster shot can provide extra protection to you, your family and your community by reducing your chance of getting COVID-19 and spreading it to others, including children too young to be vaccinated and friends and family who are at increased risk of severe COVID-19. Booster shots are especially important given the presence of more contagious variants of the virus.

Does the booster shot need to be the same vaccine brand as my initial vaccine series?
No. You may get a Pfizer, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson booster shot, regardless of which vaccine you received for your initial vaccination series.

Talk to your health care provider if you have questions about which vaccine to get. If you need help finding a provider, call 311.

Do the booster shots have the same ingredients as the vaccines used for the initial vaccine series?
The Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson booster shot is the same vaccine as the initial vaccine series. The Moderna booster shot has the same ingredients but is a smaller dose of the vaccine that is given to people for their initial vaccine series.

Are there side effects from the booster shot?
You may get side effects from the booster shot. Side effects usually are mild to moderate and last one to three days. Side effects may include arm soreness, headaches, body aches, tiredness and fever. Serious side effects are rare but may occur after a booster shot.

I am immunocompromised and got a third vaccine dose. Can I get a booster shot?
People ages 16 and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised and received a third dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine can get a booster shot at least six months after their third dose. For information about third doses, read Third Dose for People Who Are Immunocompromised at on.nyc.gov/thirddose.
I received a different COVID-19 vaccine outside of the U.S. or as part of a clinical trial. Can I get a booster shot?
People age 16 and older who received two doses of a vaccine authorized for emergency use by the World Health Organization (but not authorized or approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration) can get a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine at least six months after their last vaccine dose. People that are part of the Novavax clinical trial and received active vaccine (not placebo) may also receive a Pfizer vaccine booster. For more information, visit cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html.

Where can I get a booster shot?
You can get a booster shot anywhere that offers the brand of vaccine you want. To find a vaccination site, visit nyc.gov/vaccinefinder and choose your preferred brand from the “Any vaccine” drop-down. You can also call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) for help finding a City-run vaccination site. To schedule a free in-home vaccination, visit nyc.gov/homevaccine or call 877-829-4692.

Can I get a booster shot at the same time as other vaccines, such as the flu vaccine?
Yes. You can get a booster shot at the same time as other vaccines, or any time before or after. If you have not yet gotten your flu shot, try to find a site that offers both vaccines, such as many pharmacies.

Is a booster shot free?
Yes, a booster shot is free for anyone who is eligible to get one. If you have insurance, it may be billed, but you will not be charged an administration fee or any other fee.

What documents do I need to show to get a booster shot?
You will need to show a document with your date of birth, such as a driver’s license, non-driver ID, IDNYC, birth certificate or passport. Bring your vaccination card if you have it.

Do I need a booster shot to be fully vaccinated?
No. People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the second dose of a two-dose vaccine (such as Pfizer or Moderna) or two weeks after the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 12.14.21