

COVID-19 Booster Shot Recommendations

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene recommends a booster shot for anyone age 18 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, some studies show that protection against mild to moderate infection is not as strong and may decrease over time. A booster shot can provide extra protection to you, your family and your community by reducing your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19.

How do I know if I need a booster shot?

Everyone should consider getting a booster shot. For most people, the benefits of getting a booster shot in providing added protection against COVID-19 and its serious health consequences outweigh any risks.

It is especially important for people age 65 and older, people with an underlying medical condition that increases the risk of severe COVID-19 and people at increased risk of exposure to get a booster shot. Also, everyone who got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago should get a booster shot.

Talk to your health care provider if you have questions about whether you should get a booster shot or which vaccine to get. If you need help finding a provider, call **311**.

Does the booster shot need to be of 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.

We recommend that people who received two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine try to get the same vaccine for their booster shot. Limited data shows that a Pfizer or Moderna booster shot could result in higher antibody levels than a Johnson & Johnson booster shot.

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 people receive for their 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 age 18 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. Can I get a booster shot?

People age 18 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.

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 some 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.

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