COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters - What You Need to Know

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Why should I get the booster?

All three of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States remain highly effective in reducing the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. The vaccine's protection against asymptomatic, mild, and moderate COVID-19 disease may decrease over time.

A single-dose vaccine booster shot can:

- strengthen your protection against catching COVID-19
- increase your immune response to the virus
- enhance protection against mild and moderate COVID-19 disease
- enhance protection against the Delta variant
help reduce the spread of the virus

Who should get the COVID-19 vaccine booster shot?

You may decide to get the booster based on your individual risk factors, the potential health benefits of getting the booster, and to help stop the spread of this virus.

Teens age 16 and 17: If you received your second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at least six months ago, you are now eligible for the Pfizer booster. As of December 9, 2021, those ages 16 and 17 who received either the Moderna vaccine (2 initial doses) or the Johnson and Johnson vaccine (1 initial dose) are not eligible to receive any COVID-19 booster at this time.

Adults ages 18 and older: If you received your second dose of the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines at least six months ago, you should now get the booster. If you received the single-dose Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at least two months ago, you should now get the booster.

Does my booster need to come from the same pharmaceutical company as my initial COVID-19 vaccine?

If you're age 18 or older, you can “mix and match” manufacturers of all FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines and single-dose booster shots.

If you are age 16 or 17, you are eligible to receive a Pfizer booster shot only if you already received two doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. If you are age 16 or 17 and already received two doses of the Moderna vaccine or one dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, you are ineligible to receive a booster shot from any manufacturer until you turn 18 years old.

When you were initially vaccinated against COVID-19, you should have been
provided a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card that states which vaccine you received and the date(s) you received each dose. Bring this card to your booster shot appointment.

What are the risks of getting the booster shot?

The risks of and reactions to the COVID-19 booster shots appear to be the same as those from the initial vaccines. The vaccines and their respective booster shots are the same formulas. The Moderna booster, however, is half the dose of the initial Moderna vaccine.

If I don’t get the booster, am I still protected against COVID?

COVID-19 vaccines are working well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death from the virus. However, the protection from asymptomatic COVID infection and mild to moderate symptoms lowers over time. If you don’t get a COVID-19 vaccine booster, you are still considered “fully vaccinated” two weeks after your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or two weeks after a single dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

Can I get the seasonal flu shot and the COVID-19 vaccine booster at the same time?

Yes, you can get a COVID-19 vaccine or booster shot and the seasonal flu vaccine at the same time. Possible side effects from the COVID vaccine/booster are typically the same when received alone or with other vaccines.

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