

## Updated COVID-19 Boosters

### TOPLINE KEY MESSAGES

#### **CDC recommends that everyone ages 12 years and older get an updated COVID-19 booster, when eligible.**

- Today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [endorsed](#) the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)'s recommendation that people ages 12 and older receive an updated COVID-19 booster for broader protection before a possible surge in COVID-19 illnesses later this fall and winter.
- CDC's recommendation applies to over 200 million people in the United States, and follows FDA [emergency use authorization](#) of the [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) and [Moderna](#) bivalent COVID-19 boosters on August 31, 2022.
- Updated COVID-19 boosters can both help restore protection that has waned since previous vaccination, and provide broader protection against newer variants. They target the most recent Omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, that are more transmissible and more likely to be able to evade antibodies made against earlier subvariants. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [advised manufacturers earlier this year](#) to add these subvariant components to their COVID-19 vaccine boosters.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech updated COVID-19 booster is recommended for adolescents and adults ages 12 years and older, and the Moderna updated COVID-19 booster for adults ages 18 years and older.
- Everyone who is eligible—including those who are moderately or severely immunocompromised—are recommended to receive 1 dose of the updated vaccine.
- People are eligible to receive updated boosters at least 2 months since their last COVID-19 dose (either the final primary series dose or the last booster).
- ACIP also discussed updated COVID-19 boosters for younger age groups—including Pfizer-BioNTech for children ages 5 through 11 years, and Moderna for children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years. When FDA authorizes these vaccines and age groups, CDC will expand its recommendations accordingly.
- We know from studies conducted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic that it is safe to receive both a COVID-19 vaccine and a flu vaccine at the same visit. CDC and ACIP recommend this practice.

#### **CDC has also streamlined what it means to be “up to date” with COVID-19 vaccines.**

- CDC has long recommended that everyone [stay up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccination, including receiving all primary series and booster doses.
- You are up to date if you have completed a primary series and received the most recent booster dose recommended for you by CDC.

#### **COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and CDC recommends everyone stay up to date.**

- COVID-19 vaccines are effective. The COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the U.S. continue to reduce the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death, including against the Omicron variant and subvariants.
- COVID-19 vaccines have undergone and continue to undergo the most intense safety monitoring in U.S. history. Clinical research has demonstrated the safety and effectiveness of the recommended COVID-19 primary series vaccines, as well as the recommended COVID-19 boosters.
- CDC recommends everyone get and [stay up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccination. This means everyone:
  - Ages 6 months through 4 years should get all COVID-19 primary series doses.

- Ages 5 years and older should get all COVID-19 primary series doses, plus the most recent booster dose recommended for them.
- You can check if and when to get COVID-19 boosters with [CDC's COVID-19 booster tool](#).
- V-safe is a safety monitoring system that lets you share with CDC how you, or your dependent, feel after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. People can enroll in v-safe after any dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by going to [vsafe.cdc.gov](https://vsafe.cdc.gov).

**For Public**

**Q: Why is CDC recommending another COVID-19 booster now, when there is significantly less risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death compared to earlier in the pandemic?**

**A:** CDC anticipates continued circulation of the virus that causes COVID-19 and the potential for surges in virus circulation over the next several months. Being up to date with COVID-19 vaccines is the best way to protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death associated with COVID-19. The updated boosters are formulated to better protect against ongoing community transmission of the most recently circulating COVID-19 variants. Data [suggest](#) they also increase our immune response to help protect us all against future variants.

In addition, studies show that people who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 are at higher risk of developing post-COVID conditions compared to people who were vaccinated and had breakthrough infections. They also show that when people who have post-COVID conditions from a previous infection get vaccinated, the vaccines help improve their symptoms.

**Q: Are these new vaccines, and how could they protect against the variants that are currently circulating?**

**A:** For the updated (bivalent) COVID-19 boosters, much of the vaccine is the same as the original (monovalent) vaccines, but they now have additional protection against the recent Omicron subvariants. This will help our immune system fight off a wider variety of variants for this upcoming winter season. The process is very similar to flu vaccines, where the components of the vaccine are updated annually to help fight against the specific flu viruses anticipated to be circulating during the upcoming season.

**Q: When will updated COVID-19 boosters be available for children ages 5 through 11 years?**

**A:** At its meeting on September 1, 2022, ACIP discussed data about updated COVID-19 boosters from Pfizer-BioNTech for children ages 5 through 11 years, and from Moderna for children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years. When FDA authorizes these vaccines and age groups, CDC will expand its recommendations accordingly. In the meantime, the current boosters available to children 5 through 11 years are effective in preventing severe disease, and the CDC encourages parents to get a booster for their child if they are eligible. It is also important that unvaccinated children start their primary series. Being up to date with COVID-19 vaccines is the best way to protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death associated with COVID-19.

**Q: Will non-mRNA COVID-19 boosters become available?**

**A:** It is expected that the FDA will review [data](#) on safety and effectiveness of a monovalent Novavax non-mRNA (protein subunit) COVID-19 booster later this year. As part of the vaccine authorization process, CDC may update clinical guidance to recommend this booster. This would provide a COVID-19 booster option for people who are allergic to—or who are otherwise not eligible for—mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.

**Q: Will this round of COVID-19 boosters be the last that CDC recommends for a while?**

**A:** We know updated COVID-19 vaccines provide protection against the currently circulating variants, and data suggest they also increase our immune response to help protect us against future variants. We also know from early data that individuals with a previous COVID-19 infection and a COVID-19 vaccination show

the highest antibody response, or the best protection possible. While we don't know how long this protection from the updated boosters will last, we are hopeful this will lead to longer protection from the COVID-19 vaccine with less frequent boosting in the future. As more data are collected, we will be better able to answer this question and provide further guidance.

**Q: Why did CDC change what it means to be “up to date” with COVID-19 vaccines?**

**A:** What it means to be up to date is simpler and easier to follow now that updated boosters are here: You are up to date if you have completed a primary series and received the most recent booster dose recommended for you by CDC. This will help people know more easily how to be up to date, help healthcare and vaccine providers provide the right advice for their patients, and make data monitoring and communications efforts more efficient and effective. As we continue to learn more about COVID-19, we will also update information for the public.

**Q: Can a person be up to date without an updated COVID-19 booster?**

**A:** Yes. You are up to date if you have completed a primary series and received the most recent booster dose recommended for you by CDC. That COVID-19 booster could be the previously available (monovalent) Pfizer-BioNTech boosters, for people ages 5 through 11 years who received Pfizer-BioNTech primary series. However, everyone eligible for a bivalent booster should get one for the best protection. And if a person has gotten all primary series vaccines doses, but is not yet eligible for a booster, they are up to date.

**Q: Will the original (monovalent) Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines continue to be available?**

**A:** Monovalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be used for primary vaccination. In terms of mRNA COVID-19 boosters, people ages 12 years and older are now only eligible for updated (bivalent) mRNA COVID-19 boosters. Monovalent Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 boosters will continue to be available for children ages 5 through 11 years who received the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine as their primary series.

**Q: Is it safe to get the updated COVID-19 booster the same day as a flu shot?**

**A:** We know from studies conducted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic that it is safe to receive both a COVID-19 vaccine and a flu vaccine at the same visit. You have the option of getting both vaccines at the same visit if the timing works. If you haven't gotten your currently-recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccine, get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can, as well as your flu vaccine.

**Q: Should people get an updated booster if they previously had COVID-19?**

**A:** People who recently had COVID-19 may consider delaying the next COVID-19 vaccine dose (primary dose or updated booster) by 3 months from when symptoms started or, if they had no symptoms, when they first received a positive test. Reinfection is less likely in the weeks to months after infection. However, certain factors, such as personal risk of severe disease, local [COVID-19 Community Level](#), and the most common [COVID-19 variant](#) currently causing illness, could be reasons to get a vaccine sooner rather than later.

## For Healthcare Professionals and Vaccine Providers

**Q: Will enough doses be in place in the beginning of the updated COVID-19 vaccine booster campaign to vaccinate everyone who wants one?**

**A:** The U.S. government has procured 171 million doses of updated boosters. Distribution of updated COVID-19 boosters will be steady and increasing to the majority of vaccine providers through the month of September 2022. Updated COVID-19 booster availability and scheduling will be accessible on [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), and more sites will come online as vaccines are delivered.

**Q: Is it safe to give the bivalent COVID-19 booster the same day as a flu shot?**

**A:** A wealth of evidence from routine vaccines—plus recent evidence from several studies specifically on COVID-19 and flu—indicates they are safe to give at the same visit on the same day at different injection sites. This practice is recommended by CDC and its Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices (ACIP). Guidance on giving 2 or more vaccines at the same visit can be found at: [Vaccine Administration Route and Site | CDC](#)

**Q: Should healthcare providers encourage patients to get a COVID-19 booster the same day as a flu shot?**

**A:** Yes. Coadministration, or giving more than one vaccine at the same visit, of all recommended vaccines is important because it increases the probability that an individual will be up to date with vaccines. It is also an important part of immunization practice if a health care provider is uncertain that a patient will return for additional vaccines.

**Q: What should we say to patients to encourage them to receive COVID-19 boosters at the same visit with flu vaccines?**

**A:** CDC guidance supports receiving your flu vaccine at the same time as your COVID-19 boosters, if you are eligible. We know from studies conducted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic that receiving a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other routine immunizations is safe. We also know that both COVID-19 and flu vaccines have been shown to reduce illness, hospitalizations, and deaths.

**Q: What should we say to patients who are tired of COVID-19 vaccinations, to encourage them to receive an updated COVID-19 booster?**

**A:** There is a lot of information circulating about COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, so we understand this can be confusing to patients. The most important thing we know is that COVID-19 vaccines and boosters are our best defense against COVID-19 and the subsequent variants circulating in our communities. Research has shown us that boosters help prevent severe disease, hospitalization, and death, and the updated boosters are formulated to better protect against ongoing community transmission of the most recently circulating COVID-19 variants. We have the tools to protect ourselves, so it is important that we use them.

**Q: Should we administer updated boosters to patients who have previously had COVID-19?**

**A:** People who recently had SARS-CoV-2 infection may consider delaying a primary series dose or their COVID-19 vaccine booster dose by 3 months from symptom onset or positive test (if infection was asymptomatic). [Studies](#) have shown that increased time between infection and vaccination may result in an improved immune response to vaccination. Also, a low risk of reinfection has been observed in the weeks to months following infection. Individual factors such as risk of COVID-19 [severe disease](#), [COVID-19 Community Level](#), or characteristics of the predominant SARS-CoV-2 strain should be taken into account when

determining whether to delay getting a COVID-19 vaccination after infection.

**Q: If vaccine providers don't have updated (bivalent) COVID-19 booster doses in stock yet, what should they do for people who have scheduled COVID-19 booster appointments scheduled?**

**A:** Vaccine providers should reach out and reschedule those appointments for when they know they will have the updated (bivalent) COVID-19 boosters available, or refer those patients to another location that has the updated (bivalent) booster available.