



# COVID-19 Vaccines - Frequently Asked Questions

## BOOSTER DOSES



To view these and other vaccine FAQs online, visit the [COVID-19 vaccine webpage](#).

### Why are COVID-19 vaccine booster doses important?

Booster doses are used for many different vaccines to provide continued protection against severe disease. The [COVID-19 vaccines continue to work well](#) at protecting people from severe disease. Over time, however, the level of this protection can weaken. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine booster is important because it strengthens your immunity. This gives you better protection from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and even dying.

Get the booster dose that is recommended for you (see below).

### What is an updated COVID-19 booster?

This fall, the updated (bivalent) boosters have replaced the original (monovalent) boosters. They are also known as the fall 2022 boosters.

These updated fall Pfizer and Moderna boosters contain the same basic ingredients as the original vaccines but have been updated to target the most recent Omicron subvariants (BA.4 and BA.5) as well as the original strain of the COVID-19 virus. The BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants cause most of the current cases of COVID-19 in California. They are more contagious than earlier strains.

These updated fall boosters can both help restore protection that has decreased over time and can provide broader protection against newer variants.

### Who should get a COVID-19 booster dose?

**Everyone 5 and older should get one fall updated (bivalent) booster** at least 2 months after their last COVID-19 vaccine dose (either the final primary series dose or the last monovalent booster). This is regardless of how many boosters or which type of vaccine(s) they got in the past.

- People age 6 and older can get either a Pfizer or Moderna fall booster.
- Children age 5 can only get the Pfizer fall booster.

**Note: Children ages 11 and under get a lower dose of the updated booster than teens and adults**

**There are no booster doses authorized for children ages 6 months-4 years of age**

#### ***Alternative booster option for certain people ages 18 and older***

People ages 18 and older can receive a Novavax (monovalent) vaccine as a booster instead of getting the recommended updated Pfizer or Moderna booster if they meet all of the following criteria:

1. They are unable or unwilling to receive an updated booster (for instance, if they are severely allergic to the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines); AND
2. They have completed primary series vaccination; AND
3. They have never had a booster before.





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The Novavax booster is given at least 6 months after completing the last dose of the primary series.

Visit the interactive *Find Out When to Get a Booster* tool on the CDC [Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines Including Boosters](#) webpage to see when you (or your child) can get a booster.

Talk to your doctor if you have questions.

### Can I get a booster if I had COVID?

Yes. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine after you had COVID-19 provides added protection against it in the future.

- **If you have COVID-19 now**, wait until you have recovered (if you had symptoms) and finished isolation to get a COVID-19 vaccine. This is so that you don't spread COVID-19 to healthcare workers and others when you go to get vaccinated.
- **If you recently had COVID-19**, you may consider delaying a vaccine dose (primary series or booster) by 3 months from when your symptoms started or when you first had a positive test (if you didn't have any symptoms). Your risk of re-infection is less likely in the first few months after recent COVID-19 infection. A longer time between infection and getting a vaccine may also result in a better immune response. However, you should not put the dose off for more than 3 months and it would be safe to receive the vaccine earlier.

### What are the risks of getting a booster?

Reactions after booster doses are like those after primary doses. Most side effects are mild to moderate and last 2 days or less. As with the primary series, serious side effects are rare. For more details, visit the CDC webpage [Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines](#). The benefits of getting a booster dose outweigh any known and potential risks.

### Will I need to show a doctor's note or prescription to get a booster dose?

No, you do not need a doctor's note or prescription to get a booster dose. When you go to the location, take proof of vaccination such as your CDC white card or digital vaccination record. Visit the Public Health [How to Get Vaccinated](#) webpage for more information.

### Where can I get more information?



- To print or view this FAQ or FAQs on other COVID-19 vaccine topics, scan the QR code or visit [COVID-19 vaccine FAQs](#).
- CDC webpage [Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines Including Boosters](#).
- [VaccinateLACounty.com](#) – including [COVID-19 Vaccine Schedules](#) with graphics to show when each dose is due and information on [How to Get Vaccinated](#).
- Talk to your doctor if you have questions.

