

What is the difference between an “additional dose (third dose)” and a “booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine?”

According to [MSDH](#), individuals with moderately to severely compromised immune systems are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 and may not mount the same immune response to the two-dose vaccine primary series compared to people who are not immunocompromised. Therefore, **an additional dose** (or third dose in the primary series) to the two-dose mRNA vaccine series is recommended at least four weeks after completion of the primary series.

A COVID-19 **booster dose** is given to provide additional immunity after the initial immune response to the primary two-dose series of vaccine has waned over time. This will help maintain (or even boost) immunity for longer time periods and provide additional protection. The COVID-19 booster dose is recommended only for certain populations that are at least six months past completion of the two-dose Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine series.

Am I eligible for the third dose?

You qualify for a third dose of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine if you:

- Have been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Have moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Have advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Are receiving active treatment with high-dose steroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response
- Have any other medical condition that your provider says will limit your immune response

You can schedule an additional vaccination dose at a county health department or through your doctor or regular health care provider.

- **Make an appointment at the Health Center (Infirmary)** (662) 644-4865
- **Consult your doctor** or a health care provider. They can evaluate your health status and determine whether you need an additional vaccination dose. If you do, they will provide the vaccination.
- **Schedule a third dose appointment at a county health department**
You'll be asked questions about qualifying for additional vaccination and be able to select a county health department for an appointment
- [Find a vaccination provider »](#)

Who is eligible/recommended for a third dose?

Based on data that immunocompromised people may not respond to the initial 2 dose series, the Mississippi State Department of Health shared that the following people are recommended to receive an additional or “**third**” dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least 28 days after the last dose (should receive dose of the same vaccine that was received initially)

- Receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

Who is currently eligible for booster vaccines?

According to the [Mississippi State Department of Health](#), a single booster dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for certain groups who have already received two doses of Pfizer vaccine **at least six months ago**.

- Long-term care facility residents
- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Adults aged 18 and older with certain [underlying medical conditions](#) (check list)
- Adults aged 18 and older in [certain occupations](#) that increase their risk of exposure:
 - First responders (healthcare workers, firefighters, police, congregate care staff)
 - Education staff (teachers, support staff, daycare workers: this category encompasses **MVSU faculty and staff**)
 - Food and agriculture workers
 - Manufacturing workers
 - Corrections workers
 - U.S. Postal Service workers
 - Public transit workers
 - Grocery store workers

What are the underlying medical conditions to consider for receiving a booster shot?

Underlying medical conditions to consider for a booster dose of Pfizer (determined by medical provider):

- Chronic kidney disease,
- Chronic lung diseases (COPD, asthma, etc),
- Dementia or other neurological conditions
- Diabetes (type 1 or 2),
- Down syndrome,
- Heart conditions (such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies),
- Hypertension
- Liver Disease
- Overweight (defined as a body mass index (BMI) > 25 kg/m² but < 30 kg/m²), obesity (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m² but < 40 kg/m²), or severe obesity (BMI of ≥ 40 kg/m²),
- Pregnancy,
- Sickle cell disease or thalassemia,
- Smoking (current or former),
- Stroke,
- Substance abuse disorders, and
- Other medical conditions determined by the medical provider (see CDC reference [Underlying Medical Conditions for Clinicians](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/downloads/pdf/14-0011.pdf) (cdc.gov))

What are the risks to getting a booster shot?

- According to the CDC, so far, [reactions reported](#) after getting the Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot were similar to that of the 2-shot primary series. Fatigue and pain at the injection site were the most commonly reported side effects, and overall, most side effects were mild to moderate. However, as with the 2-shot primary series, [serious side effects are rare](#), but may occur.

Am I still considered “fully vaccinated” if I don’t get a booster shot?

- According to the CDC, yes. Everyone is still considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a 2-shot series, such as the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the J&J/Janssen vaccine.

Can I get a flu vaccine at the same time I get my COVID-19 booster shot?

- According to the [CDC](#), you can get a flu vaccine at the same time you get a COVID-19 vaccine, including a COVID-19 booster shot.

Where can I get booster vaccines?

- Eligible individuals can receive a COVID-19 booster dose at the University Health Center (Infirmary). To schedule an appointment, call (662) 644-4865
- Check with your doctor, pharmacy, or other vaccination provider about getting a COVID-19 booster dose. [Find a vaccination provider »](#)
- Booster doses are also available from county health departments. Use the [online scheduler](#) or call the Mississippi COVID-19 Hotline at 877-978-6453 for assistance.

Can I interchange vaccines and get a different booster than my original two-dose vaccine?

Eligible individuals may receive a booster dose of **any** of type of COVID-19 vaccine currently available: Moderna, Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson.

Do we need a booster shot because the vaccine is not working?

According to the CDC, [COVID-19 vaccines are working well](#) to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating [Delta variant](#). However, public health experts are starting to see reduced protection, especially among certain populations, against mild and moderate disease.

When can I get a COVID-19 vaccine booster if I am NOT in one of the recommended groups?

According to the CDC, additional populations may be recommended to receive a booster shot as more data become available. The [COVID-19 vaccines approved and authorized in the United States](#) continue to be [effective](#) at reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. Experts are looking at all available data to understand how well the vaccines are working for different populations. This includes looking at how new variants, like Delta, affect vaccine effectiveness.