



# 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 for people ages 12 and older. 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 lessened since previous vaccination or previous COVID-19 infection and can help provide broader protection against newer variants.

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

**Everyone 12 and older should get a fall (updated) bivalent booster** at least 2 months after their last COVID-19 vaccine dose (either the final primary series dose or the last booster). This is regardless of how many boosters or which type of vaccine(s) they got in the past.

- Adults 18 and older get either the Pfizer or Moderna fall booster.
- Adolescents 12-17 get the Pfizer fall booster

**Children ages 5 through 11 years who received a primary series of Pfizer vaccine should get the original (monovalent) booster** at least 5 months after the last dose of the primary series (or at least 3 months after the last primary dose if the child is moderately or severely immunocompromised).

**Booster doses are not currently recommended for the following groups:**

- Children ages 6 months-4 years of age
- Children ages 5 through-11 years who received a primary series of Moderna vaccine.

When the FDA authorizes an updated booster for these age groups, the recommendations will change.

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 if you (or your child) can get a booster.

Talk to your doctor if you have questions.





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### 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 often low in the first few months after recent COVID-19 infection.

### 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.