

## Booster shots

COVID-19 vaccines continue to work very well at reducing the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death, but data suggest that protection against COVID-19 infection becomes less over time. A booster shot is given when protection from the original vaccination begins to decrease. This additional dose of vaccine can help get protection back up to a higher level. The updated (bivalent) boosters also help protect against newer versions (variants) of the COVID-19 virus that are currently spreading, specifically the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron variants. For more information on the bivalent booster visit [Why You Should Get an Updated \(Bivalent\) Booster \(PDF\)](#).

People who have recently had COVID-19 can get vaccinated after you have completed your isolation period and are feeling better. People may consider waiting until 3 months to get vaccinated because they may have some protection after being infected with COVID-19, but that protection decreases quickly over time. 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.

### **More information about booster shots**

- Many routine vaccines require booster shots to maintain protection. For example, people are due to get a tetanus shot every 10 years. That shot is a booster shot. It "boosts" your ability to fight the disease if you are exposed, because we know original protection from the vaccine decreases over time.
- People who have received their primary vaccine series (e.g., two doses of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine) still have some protection even once protection starts to decrease. The booster shot helps get protection back up to a higher level.
- People with certain immunocompromising conditions that received an additional dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine as part of their primary vaccine series will also need boosters.

## Who should get a booster shot and what to get

Minnesotans age 5 and older should get an updated (bivalent) booster shot. The timing of your booster shot depends on your age and the vaccine you received for your primary vaccine series and if you were recommended to get an additional dose as part of your primary series.

People with certain immunocompromising conditions are recommended to get an additional dose of vaccine as part of their primary series. They should get a booster dose as well. Talk to

your health care provider and learn more at [CDC: COVID-19 Vaccines for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People](#).

The vaccine that people 6 years and older get for their booster does not have to be the same vaccine that they received for their primary series. Children who are 5 years old can only get Pfizer for their booster. Children age 5 to 11 years old receive a smaller dose of vaccine in their booster shot than those 12 years and older. Talk to your health care provider about booster doses, and any questions about mixing and matching doses.

**If you got the Pfizer vaccine (age 5+):**

- People age 5 years and older should get an updated (bivalent) booster shot at least 2 months after their primary series of vaccine or last original (monovalent) booster shot.
- Children who are 5 years old should only get the Pfizer booster.
- People age 6 years and older can get either the Pfizer or Moderna booster\*.

**If you got the Moderna vaccine (age 6+):**

- People age 6 years and older should get an updated (bivalent) booster shot at least 2 months after their primary series of vaccine or last original (monovalent) booster shot.
- People age 6 years and older can get either the Pfizer or Moderna booster\*.

**If you got the Novavax vaccine (age 12+):**

- People age 12 years and older should get an updated (bivalent) booster shot at least 2 months after their primary series of vaccine.
- The booster can be Pfizer or Moderna\*.

**If you got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine:**

- People age 18 and older should get an updated (bivalent) booster shot at least 2 months after their single dose or last original (monovalent) booster.
- The booster can be Pfizer or Moderna\*.

\*A monovalent Novavax booster dose (instead of a bivalent booster dose) may be used in limited situations in people ages 18 years and older who completed a primary series, have not received any previous booster dose(s), and are unable to receive an mRNA vaccine (i.e., mRNA vaccine contraindicated or not available) or are unwilling to receive an mRNA vaccine and

would otherwise not receive a booster dose. The booster would be given at least 6 months after the primary series. Talk to your health care provider for more information.