

COVID-19 Vaccines: Second Booster Dose FAQ

This document includes COVID-19 vaccine booster dose information and recommendations for those who are eligible to receive a [second booster dose](#). If you have not yet completed your COVID-19 vaccine [primary series](#) and/or received your [first booster dose](#), then you are not currently eligible for a second booster dose.

When did a second booster dose become available?

On March 29, 2022, the U.S. [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) authorized a second booster dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or the Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for people ages 50 years or older and certain immunocompromised individuals (those with a weakened immune system). Following FDA's authorization, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) updated their COVID-19 vaccine recommendations to allow certain immunocompromised individuals and people over the age of 50 who received an initial booster dose at least four months ago to be eligible for another mRNA booster (or second booster dose). Additionally, the CDC expanded their second mRNA booster dose recommendations to also include adults who received both a primary vaccine and booster dose of Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine at least four months ago.

Who should receive a second booster dose?

Currently, there are three populations eligible to receive a second booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine. These populations include people who are at an increased risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19 infection. [According to the FDA](#), current evidence suggests some waning of protection over time against serious outcomes from COVID-19 in older and immunocompromised individuals. People need to consider their age and health status when choosing whether or not to receive a second booster dose. North Dakotans are encouraged to have a conversation with their doctor or a trusted health care provider to make sure they are making the best decision for themselves.

1. All adults ages 50 years and older

All adults ages 50 and older **should** receive a second booster dose of an mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine at least four months after their first booster dose of any approved or authorized COVID-19 vaccine.

2. All individuals 12 years and older who are immunocompromised

All individuals age 12 or older who are [moderately or severely immunocompromised](#) **should** receive a second booster dose of an mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine at least four months after their first booster dose. Currently, adolescents aged 12-17 years old are only authorized to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for all doses including their primary series, additional dose and booster doses. If you are moderately or severely immunocompromised and have not received your [additional dose](#), you must do so before requesting a booster dose. Please refer to your health care provider if you have questions regarding if your medical condition qualifies you as a patient who is moderately or severely immunocompromised.

3. All adults 18-49 years old who have received two doses of Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine

All adults 18-49 years old who received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for both their primary dose and first booster dose at least four months ago are now eligible to receive a second booster dose of an mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine. This guidance does NOT include adults aged 18-49 years who received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for their primary series but then received a first booster dose of an mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine.

Why would I need second booster dose?

There are a number of reasons why you should receive your second booster dose now that you are eligible. Depending on your personal level of risk associated with COVID-19 infection, including your age and any underlying medical conditions, you may be at an increased risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19.

A second booster may lower your risk of dying due to COVID-19.

[Data from Israel](#) indicates an additional (second) booster dose is safe and lifesaving. Mortality due to the omicron variant in this data set was significantly lower—a 78% reduction—in those ages 60 and older in Israel who received a second booster dose.

Your risk of severe COVID-19 illness increases with age.

The older you are, the greater the benefit a second booster dose may bring you, because protection provided by vaccine booster shots wane over time. Throughout the pandemic, older adults have been more likely to become severely ill from COVID-19. Older adults with COVID-19 are at increased risk of requiring [hospitalization](#), intensive care admission or a ventilator to help them breathe. Additionally, older adults have a [25x-340x greater risk of dying](#), depending on their age, from COVID-19 compared to individuals aged 18-29 years old. Older adults and individuals living in long term care facilities (such as assisted living and skilled nursing homes) are encouraged to speak with their health care provider regarding receiving a second booster dose.

Vaccine effectiveness after your first booster may begin to wane over time.

The vaccine effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine has been shown to decrease over time. Therefore, public health officials and health care workers strongly recommend the importance of staying up to date with your immunizations and getting booster doses when you are eligible. During the peak of the omicron wave, adults were [94% less likely](#) to end up on a ventilator or die from COVID-19 after receiving three shots (or after their first booster dose) when compared to those who had only received two shots. However, this observed level of protection may begin to decrease over time.

[A recent CDC analysis](#) shows evidence of waning immunity against COVID-19 emergency room visits and hospitalizations visits during the omicron-predominant period. Two months after a third dose (or first booster dose), people were 91% protected against hospitalization. Four months after that dose, protection dropped down to about 78%. Fortunately, a [study](#) conducted in Israel found recipients of both Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines had a ~9-10-fold increase in IgG and neutralizing titers within two

weeks of second booster dose vaccination, restoring titers to those measured after the third vaccine dose. Thus, an additional booster dose can provide additional protection.

Are second booster doses safe?

Data suggests a second booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine improves protection against severe COVID-19 and is not associated with any new safety concerns. The FDA has determined the known and potential benefits of a second COVID-19 vaccine booster dose with either of these vaccines outweigh their known and potential risks in these populations.

Do I need a second booster dose if I previously had COVID-19 infection?

Yes. However, North Dakotans are encouraged to have a conversation with a trusted health care provider if they have further questions regarding when to receive a second booster dose after a previous infection. Depending on your age, health status, when you had your prior infection and which COVID-19 variant you likely had, your health care provider may determine it is best to delay a second booster dose.

The CDC recommends people be vaccinated even if they previously tested positive for COVID-19. North Dakotans who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 3 months, may choose to delay vaccination for 90 days after recovering from their infection. [Emerging evidence](#) suggests the best protection against COVID-19 illness is hybrid immunity, having both vaccination and prior infection. Meaning, even if you had a COVID-19 infection in the past you should still eventually get vaccinated in order to further boost your immunity.

When should I receive my second booster dose?

Deciding when to receive your second booster dose can be a tough choice. If you are thinking about delaying your second booster dose vaccination, it is advised that you speak with a trusted health care provider in order to ensure you are making the best decision regarding your health.

Among people who are eligible for a second booster dose, the following people should consider getting their second booster dose as soon as possible (i.e., 4 months after their first booster dose):

- People with [underlying medical conditions](#) that increase the risk of severe COVID-19 disease
- People living with someone who is immunocompromised, at increased risk for severe disease, or who cannot be vaccinated due to age or contraindication
- People at increased risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2, such as through occupational, institutional, or other activities (e.g., travel or large gatherings)
- People who live or work in or near an area where the [COVID-19 community level](#) is medium or high or are traveling to such an area

Among people who are eligible for a second booster dose, the following people may consider delaying their second booster dose:

- People who have had a SARS-CoV-2 infection within the last 3 months

- People who may be hesitant about getting another recommended booster dose in the future, as a booster dose may be more important in the fall and/or if a variant-specific vaccine is needed

As a reminder, the CDC recommends that all individuals ages 50 years or older as well as all individuals ages 12 years or older who are moderately or severely immunocompromised **should** receive their second booster dose as soon as they become eligible and to not delay vaccination. This is due to these populations' increased risk for severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19.

It's your health and it's your decision.

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) works to provide educational resources and materials to the public in order for each individual to make educated and informed decisions regarding COVID-19 vaccines and personal health. These new second booster dose recommendations give members of our community the freedom to choose whether or not they would like to receive another dose of COVID-19 vaccine depending on their own risk factors. Aspects such as age and underlying medical conditions may increase an individual's chances of severe illness, hospitalization and death due to COVID-19 infection. For the many members within our community remaining at an increased risk of COVID-19, receiving a second booster dose may begin to help them feel the confidence they need to cautiously return back to a more normal life.

Where can I get my second booster vaccination?

Information on COVID-19 vaccine providers and clinics near you can be found on the NDDoH [COVID Vaccine Locator](#) page. You can also contact the NDDoH Hotline at 1.866.207.2880 for assistance. As a reminder, you can receive other routinely recommended vaccines (shingles, pneumococcal) at the same time as COVID-19 vaccine.

WHO CAN GET A BOOSTER?

PRIMARY SERIES
COVID-19 VACCINE

Pfizer-BioNTech

Who should get one booster:

Everyone 12 years and older

Who can get a second booster:

Adults 50 years and older

When to get your booster:

At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series

If eligible for a second booster, at least 4 months after your first booster

Which booster can you get:

- Adults 18 years and older should get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) for the first booster in most* situations
- The second booster must be an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine
- Teens 12–17 years old may only get a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster

PRIMARY SERIES
COVID-19 VACCINE

Moderna

Who should get one booster:

Adults 18 years and older

Who can get a second booster:

Adults 50 years and older

When to get your booster:

At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series

If eligible for a second booster, at least 4 months after your first booster

Which booster can you get:

For the first booster, an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) is preferred in most* situations

The second booster must be an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine

PRIMARY SERIES
COVID-19 VACCINE

Johnson & Johnson

Who should get one booster:

Adults 18 years and older

Who can get a second booster:

Anyone who received a J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for both their primary dose and booster

Adults 50 years and older who first received a J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of what type of booster they received

When to get your booster:

At least 2 months after receiving your J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccination

If eligible for a second booster, at least 4 months after your first booster

Which booster can you get:

For the first booster, an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) is preferred in most* situations

The second booster must be an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine

*Although mRNA vaccines are preferred for the first booster, J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine may be considered in some situations.

Source: [CDC Booster Guidelines](#)