Booster Shot Recommendation for Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Recipients

It is recommended that some people who got the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine and who are at increased risk of COVID-19 exposure or severe COVID-19 illness get a booster shot, especially people age 65 and older. The booster shot can be given six months or more after the second vaccine dose.

What is a booster shot?
A booster shot is an additional dose of a vaccine to provide added protection.

Who can get a booster shot?
The following groups who received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine are eligible for a booster shot:
- People 65 or older
- People 18 to 64 who live in a nursing home or other long-term care facility
- People 18 to 64 who have an underlying medical condition that increases their risk for severe COVID-19
- People 18 to 64 who are at increased risk of COVID-19 exposure due to their job (for example, health care workers) or where they live or frequently visit (for example, a homeless shelter)

Why is a booster shot being recommended?
The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are still very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death due to COVID-19. However, some studies show that protection against infection may start to decrease after about six months. A booster shot may provide extra protection to people who are at increased risk of COVID-19 exposure or severe COVID-19 illness, especially with the presence of the delta variant.

Which medical conditions increase the risk of severe COVID-19 illness?
Medical conditions that increase the risk of severe COVID-19 include diabetes, heart conditions, chronic kidney disease, chronic lung disease, liver disease, cancer, dementia, HIV and pregnancy. Visit cdc.gov and search for medical conditions for a complete list.

Who is at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 in their workplace or another setting?
Jobs that may increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19 include health care workers, teachers, day care staff, and restaurant and grocery store workers. Other settings where there may be increased risk of exposure include homeless shelters and prisons.
Does the booster shot need to be of the same vaccine brand as the first two doses?
No. You may get a Moderna, Pfizer, or Johnson & Johnson/Janssen booster shot. We recommend that people who received two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine try to get the same vaccine for their booster shot, but they have the choice to receive any of the three products.

How do I know if I need a booster shot and which vaccine to get?
Talk to your health care provider if you have questions about whether you should get a booster shot or which vaccine to get. If you need help finding a provider, call 311.

What are the risks of getting a booster shot?
For many people, the benefits of getting a booster shot outweigh any risks. A booster shot provides added protection against COVID-19 and its potentially serious health consequences. Side effects from booster shots are usually mild to moderate and may include arm soreness, headaches, body aches, tiredness and fever. Serious side effects are rare but may occur after a booster shot.

When should I get a booster shot?
You should get a booster shot six months or more after you received your second dose.

I am immunocompromised and got a third vaccine dose. Should I get a booster shot?
No. There is no recommendation to receive a fourth dose at this time. For information about third doses for people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised, visit nyc.gov/health/covidvaccine and look for Third Dose for People Who Are Immunocompromised.

Where can I get a booster shot?
You can get a booster shot anywhere that offers the brand of vaccine you want. To find a vaccination site, go to nyc.gov/vaccinefinder and choose your preferred brand from the “Any vaccine” drop-down. You can also call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) for help finding a City-run vaccination site. To schedule a free in-home vaccination, visit nyc.gov/homevaccine or call the above number.

Can I get a booster shot at the same time as other vaccines, such as the flu vaccine?
Yes. You can get a booster shot at the same time as other vaccines, or any time before or after. If you have not yet gotten your flu shot, try to find a site that offers both vaccines, such as some pharmacies.

Is a booster shot free?
Yes, a booster shot is free for anyone who is eligible to get one. If you have insurance, it may be billed, but you will not be charged an administration fee or other fee.
What documents do I need to show to get a booster shot?
You will need to show a document with your date of birth, such as a driver’s license, non-driver ID, IDNYC, birth certificate or passport. If you are between ages 18 to 64, you will need to attest that you have a medical condition that allows you to get a booster shot, or that you are at increased risk of COVID-19 exposure because of where you work, live or frequently visit. No other document is required.

Do I need a booster shot to be fully vaccinated?
No. People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after the second dose of a two-dose vaccine (such as Pfizer or Moderna) or two weeks after the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 10.22.21