COVID-19 Booster Shots for Adults 65+

With information changing almost daily, it’s understandable to have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine booster shots. This fact sheet lays out evidence-based information about the COVID-19 booster shots for adults age 65+.

Why would I need a booster shot?

Boosters ensure that you continue to have maximum protection against COVID-19, especially against COVID-19 hospitalization.

Recent studies show that booster doses help increase protection against infection, including severe infections. This is especially important for people over age 65. Compared to people who received a booster, the COVID-19 hospitalization rate was over 15x higher for unvaccinated people in this age group. For people 65 and older who were fully vaccinated without the booster, it was 3x higher.

Most vaccines, such as routine childhood vaccinations, are given in a series, and many require boosters.

How do I know when to get my first booster shot?

- **Pfizer / Moderna**: after 2 doses given over 5 months ago.
- **Johnson & Johnson**: after 1 dose given over 2 months ago.

See page 2 for information about eligibility and timing for 2nd boosters.

Anyone age 65 and older is encouraged to stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines by getting at least one booster shot.

The booster shot does not need to be the same vaccine as your initial dose(s), though mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) boosters are recommended over Johnson & Johnson for most people. Visit the [CDC Vaccine Booster website](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/booster) for more information about boosters. If you have any questions, consult with your healthcare provider.
Should I get a second booster shot?

Second booster doses are important to protect people at an increased risk of severe COVID-19 infection. You are eligible for a second booster shot if:

✓ It has been at least 4 months since your first booster and
  ✓ You are 50 years or older
  ✓ You are 12 or older and moderately or severely immunocompromised
  ✓ You are 18 or older and received Johnson & Johnson for your primary dose and your booster dose

Second booster shots are also being provided to address the lower effectiveness of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. For more information, see the CDC Vaccine Booster website.

What side effects can I expect from the booster shot?

Side effects of COVID-19 booster shots are usually mild or moderate, such as pain at the injection site, headaches, and tiredness.

How do I get a booster shot?

You can schedule an appointment or find a walk-in site online or by phone. A booster shot is free. Please confirm with your provider whether any additional fees will be charged. You will need to show a document with your date of birth, such as a driver’s license, state ID or passport.

ONLINE
Click here to schedule a booster appointment anywhere in the U.S. Just enter your zip code and select your preferred brand to find a local site.

BY PHONE
Call 1-800-232-0233 for help finding a vaccination site.

IN-HOME VACCINATIONS
Click here to find help scheduling an in-home vaccination if you are homebound.

FREE TRANSPORTATION
to and from a vaccine appointment may be available – check with your local or state health department.

Click here to view CDC information on boosters in 4 common languages (select “Languages” at the top) and click here for booster fact sheets in 33 languages.

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