

VACCINATIONS FOR ALL

COVID-19 Vaccine - Third Dose for Immunocompromised Individuals

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is there a third dose for COVID-19?

A third dose provides additional protection against COVID-19. As of August 16, 2021, a third dose is only recommended for people with certain serious medical conditions or who receive treatments that weaken their immune system. It is because they do not have a strong enough response to the vaccine, in the way that others do with just two doses, and therefore need an additional shot.

Who is eligible for a third vaccine dose against COVID-19?

You must meet the following three criteria to be eligible:

- + You are 12 years of age or older.
- + You received two doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least 28 days ago.
- + You are considered moderately to severely immunocompromised.

What does “immunocompromised” mean?

Immunocompromised individuals are people who have a disease or are taking a drug that weakens their immune system and makes it harder for them to fight infections. These people are at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Moderately to severely immunocompromised people include those who:

- + Are currently receiving treatment for cancer, such as chemotherapy
- + Are currently receiving treatment with high-dose corticosteroids (>20mg prednisone or similar) or taking medicine that weakens their immune response
- + Had an organ transplant and are now taking immunosuppressive therapy
- + Had a stem cell transplant in the past two years
- + Have an advanced or untreated HIV infection
- + Have another cause of moderate or severe immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome or Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)

Is it safe to get a third dose?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and independent experts have determined that the benefits of getting a third dose outweigh any known or potential risks.

When should I get my third dose?

You should get your third dose at least four weeks after your second dose. You can get a third dose no matter how much time has passed since your second dose.

Where can I get the third dose?

You can get your third dose at any NYC Health + Hospital locations as well as other sites around the city. You do not need to get your third dose at the same site where you got your first two doses.

To find a vaccination site, go to nyc.gov/vaccinefinder or call 877-VAX-4-NYC (877-829-4692).

Do I need to get a doctor's referral to get the third dose?

You do not need a doctor's referral to get the third dose. However, if you are unsure if you are eligible or have any particular questions given your personal health history, we recommend you discuss it with your physician. All patients will be asked to attest to the three requirements at the time of vaccination including their age (>12 years old), their previous vaccination history (completed two doses of Moderna or Pfizer more than 28 days in advance), and that they are moderately or severely immunocompromised as defined above.

Do I need to bring proof of my previous vaccination?

If you have your CDC card with your previous vaccination dates you should bring it. However, if you do not have this, you can still get your third shot but will be asked to attest that your 2nd shot was more than 28 days before.

Is a third dose free?

Yes, a third dose is free for eligible people. If you have insurance, it may be billed, but you will not be charged a copayment or other fee.

Do I have to make an appointment for my third dose?

You can walk-in to any NYC Health + Hospitals to get your third dose. For other locations, visit nyc.gov/vaccinefinder or call 877-VAX-4-NYC (877-829-4692).

I am unable to travel. Can I get the third dose at home?

All New Yorkers 12 and older can be vaccinated at home. You can sign up for in-home vaccination at forms.cityofnewyork.us/f/home (not accessible on Internet Explorer) or by calling 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692).

Is this a 'booster' shot?

This is considered a continuation of the first and second dose of the vaccine to help severely immunocompromised individuals to build up as much immunity as possible against the virus and so is considered part of the "primary series" of the vaccine, which totals 3 shots.

Is there a different amount of vaccine in this shot than my first two?

No. The amount of vaccine in the third dose is exactly the same as the first and second dose.

I have a chronic disease that would put me at high risk for getting very sick if I get COVID-19 (such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, smoking or COPD). Should I get a third dose?

Although certain chronic conditions can put you at high risk for worse illness after COVID-19 infection, you do not need a third dose at the moment. Your two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine has been proven to provide enough protection against COVID-19 for most adults.

However, recommendations can change as scientists and doctors learn more about COVID-19 and vaccines. It is possible that in the future you will be eligible for a third dose even if you are not eligible today.

If I got the first two doses of the Moderna vaccine, do I need to get the Moderna for my third dose?

Your third dose can be either Moderna or Pfizer. This is because both are mRNA vaccines and work in a similar way. However, if you are between the ages 12 and 17, you must get the Pfizer vaccine, due to the pending status of the vaccine approval by the FDA for the Moderna vaccine for children younger than 18. If you got the first two doses of the Pfizer vaccine, you can get either the Pfizer or Moderna for your third dose, regardless of your age.

I got the Johnson & Johnson's Janssen Vaccine. Should I get a third dose?

At this time, an additional dose for people who are immunocompromised and received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine is not authorized by the FDA. We expect additional information to be available soon.