

Health Advisory

Guidance about COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots

September 28, 2021

Ongoing data continues to support protection against infection, severe illness, hospitalization, and death with COVID-19 vaccinations. However, observational studies have found that a booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech is safe and effective at decreasing the risk of severe disease and infection in specific populations.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) endorse providing booster shots to individuals in the following populations who have received Pfizer-BioNTech as their primary vaccine series against COVID-19.

The booster **should** be provided **at least 6 months** after completing the Pfizer-BioNTech primary series (i.e., first 2 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech) to:

- People aged 65 years and older
- Residents aged 18 years and older residing in long-term care settings
- People aged 50-64 years with underlying medical conditions

The booster **may** be provided **at least 6 months** after completing the Pfizer-BioNTech primary series (i.e., first 2 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech) to:

- People aged 18-49 years with [underlying medical conditions](#) that put them at increased risk
- People aged 18-64 years at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting

Of note, the booster dose is not authorized for anyone under the age of 18, regardless of medical condition or occupation.

The Pfizer-BioNTech booster dose is the same vaccine at the same dose as the primary series. Side effects reported from booster shots also remain similar to the primary series. Fatigue and pain at the injection site were the most commonly reported side effects.

Individuals who qualify for booster doses may receive their shot at a PDPH clinic regardless of where they received their first two doses. Individuals may also choose to receive their vaccine at a pharmacy or their healthcare provider's office.

At this time, anyone who has completed their primary series of vaccination is considered fully vaccinated, regardless of whether they have received the booster dose. There is no authorized booster dose for individuals whose primary series was completed with Moderna or the Janssen vaccine. Moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals who received Pfizer or Moderna remain eligible for a 3rd dose of the same vaccine product one month after their primary series.

Resources:

- [Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\) of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to Prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [Evidence to Recommendation Framework: Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Booster Dose](#)
- [FDA Authorizes Booster Dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for Certain Populations](#)
- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shot](#)

SUMMARY POINTS

- Populations age 18 and over at high risk of severe disease are advised to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot at least 6 months after completing the Pfizer-BioNTech primary series (i.e., first 2 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech).
- Populations at high risk of infection based on occupation are also eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot at least 6 months after completing the Pfizer-BioNTech primary series.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech booster is identical to the doses provided in the initial series.
- There is no currently authorized booster for those who received Moderna or Janssen as their primary series of vaccination.