NYC HEALTH+ HOSPITALS

VACCINATIONS FOR ALL.

Pfizer COVID-19 Booster Shots
Frequently Asked Questions

The Pfizer COVID-19 booster shot is recommended for eligible people who received their second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine six months ago or more and who are at increased risk of COVID-19 exposure or severe COVID-19 illness, including people age 65 and older. The booster shot should be given six months or more after the second Pfizer dose.

What is a booster shot?
A booster shot is an additional dose of a vaccine for people who built protection from vaccination but whose protection may have decreased over time (this is called waning immunity).

Who can get a booster shot?
The following groups who received the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine are eligible for the Pfizer booster shot six months after the second dose:

+ People 65 or older
+ People 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 and teachers) or where they live or frequently visit (for example, a homeless shelter)

Why is a booster shot recommended?
The Pfizer vaccine is still very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death due to COVID-19. However, some studies show that protection against infection from the Pfizer vaccine 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 circulating in our communities.

Is the booster available to people who received the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine?
The Pfizer booster shot is only available for eligible people who received the first two doses of the Pfizer vaccine. The Pfizer booster is not approved for people who got the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

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. For a complete list see: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html

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.

How do I know if I need a booster shot?

Talk to your health care provider if you have questions about whether you should get a booster shot. If you need help finding a provider, call 311.

Can pregnant, nursing or women who are trying to get pregnant get a booster?

Pregnant and recently pregnant people are at increased risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people. Pregnant people should be vaccinated against COVID-19. If pregnant people meet the eligibility criteria, they should receive a booster.

What are the risks of getting a booster shot?

For many people who have received two doses of the Pfizer vaccine, the benefits of getting a booster shot outweigh any risks. So far, reactions reported after getting a third shot were similar to those after the first two doses. Tiredness and arm soreness were the most commonly reported side effects. Most side effects were mild to moderate. Side effects are rare, but may occur after a booster shot.

Is the booster shot the same vaccine as the first two doses?

Yes. The Pfizer booster shot is the same vaccine and dose as each of the first two doses.

When should I get a booster shot?

You should get a booster shot six months or more after you received your second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

If we need a booster shot, does that mean that the vaccines aren't working?

No. COVID-19 vaccines are working well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant. However, public health experts are starting to see mild reductions in protection, especially among certain populations.

I am immunocompromised and got a third vaccine dose. Should I get a booster shot too?

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 nychealthandhospitals.org/covid-19-vaccines.

Where can I get a free booster shot?

Pfizer booster shots are available at the 11 hospitals of the NYC Health + Hospitals system. You do not need to go to the same location where you got your first two doses of the Pfizer vaccine. Walk in to any NYC Health + Hospitals acute care hospital for your booster. Or schedule a booster appointment here: covid19.nychealthandhospitals.org/COVIDVaxEligibility. Pfizer booster shots are not available at NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health locations.

Can I get a booster shot at the same time as other vaccines (such as the flu vaccine)?

Yes. It is safe to 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, both are available at NYC Health + Hospitals acute care hospital locations.

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.

Will booster shots be mandated?

The New York State vaccination mandate for health care workers only applies to first and second doses. The mandate does not include booster shots.

NYC HEALTH+ HOSPITALS