

# Additional COVID-19 Vaccines and Booster Shots: What's the Difference?

After getting a vaccine, it is recommended to strengthen your immunity against the COVID-19 virus by getting an additional COVID-19 vaccine or a booster shot. So, what's the difference between an additional vaccine and a booster shot?

An additional COVID-19 vaccine shot is a third round of the vaccine that is intended for people who are immunocompromised. This includes people who:

- Are receiving active cancer treatment
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medications to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Have moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency
- Have an advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Are taking treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

Booster shots are for people who are **not** immunocompromised. The effectiveness of your primary vaccine might reduce over time. Lower vaccine effectiveness is likely due to decreasing protection as time passes since getting vaccinated. Getting a booster shot helps "boost" your immunity and helps protect you against new virus variants. All persons 12 years and older should receive a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Type of Vaccine	Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna	Johnson and Johnson (Janssen)
When should you get a booster?	At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series	At least 2 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination
Which booster should you get?	Any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States* Teens 12-17 years old may only get a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster	Any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States*

\*On Dec. 16, 2021, CDC noted a preference for individuals to receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) over the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.