**COVID-19 Booster Shot Fact Sheet**

**October 5, 2021**

1. **Why are boosters needed? (What is the data that supports booster shots?)**

1. Studies from Israel and the CDC show that 6-8 months after the second COVID-19 vaccination dose, our protection from COVID-19 is decreased and breakthrough infections are more common.
2. People over age 65 have a greater decrease in protection and more breakthrough cases after 6 months from their initial vaccination
3. The vaccine remains highly effective at preventing hospitalizations and deaths.
4. An Israeli study shows that after a booster shot, the risk of a COVID-19 infection decreases by ten-fold.
5. Booster shots are used for other common vaccinations, such as the hepatitis B and HPV vaccines.

2. **Who is currently eligible for a COVID-19 booster shot?**

1. Immunocompromised patients can get a “3rd shot” of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, as they often do not make enough antibodies to be protected after only two doses of the vaccine. Note: This “3rd shot” is different than a booster shot, where the person was adequately protected after their first 2 vaccine doses.
2. The FDA and CDC have agreed that COVID-19 vaccine booster shots are safe and appropriate for Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine recipients who completed their initial series at least 6 months ago and are:
   1. 65 years and older
   2. Age 18+ who live in [long-term care settings](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html#long-term-care)
   3. Age 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html)
   4. Age 18+ who work in [high-risk settings](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html#HighRisk) (Nursing home staff)
   5. Age 18+ who live in [high-risk settings](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html#HighRisk)

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>

3. **What about mixing and matching different COVID-19 vaccines?**

Mixing different COVID-19 vaccines is not currently recommended.

4. **What about booster shots of the Moderna and J&J vaccines?**

1. If you received the Moderna or J&J vaccine, you should wait for the FDA and CDC to approve a booster shot, which may happen soon for both.
2. Both Moderna and J&J have published solid data that booster shots for their vaccine are safe and effective.

5. **Are the COVID-19 vaccine booster shots safe?**

1. The data on booster shots for the COVID-19 vaccines shows they are very safe.
2. As stated in the CDC publication dated October 1, 2021, there are no new safety concerns related to the Pfizer or Moderna booster shots. There only remains a small risk of myocarditis and pericarditis with the vaccine.

Source for safety evaluation of booster shots: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7039e4.htm>

6. **What are the expected side effects of the booster shot compared to the first 2 shots?**

1. The side effects are very similar to those experienced by many after the second dose of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine shots. If you were tired or had a fever after the second shot, you should expect that can also happen after you receive the booster shot.
2. Most common side effects are:
   1. Sore arm
   2. Fatigue
   3. Headache
3. The side effects usually last just one day.
4. 79.4% and 74.1% reported local or systemic reactions, respectively, after the third dose; 77.6% and 76.5% reported local or systemic reactions after the second dose, respectively.

7. **Do you need a booster shot if you have had a COVID 19 infection?**

Studies have shown that protection after a COVID-19 infection is not as strong as after a vaccine dose, and you have a 2.3 times greater risk of getting another COVID-19 infection without full vaccination.

8. **Will we need more boosters after this one, such as yearly boosters?**

1. We don’t know yet if additional boosters will be necessary.
2. We are continuing to learn how long our protection will last.
3. We are also witnessing the scientific process at work and can expect recommendations to change as we learn more.