

# FACT

## What to Know About COVID-19 Booster Shots

**The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has amended its emergency use authorization (EUA) for the COVID-19 vaccines to allow for use of a single booster dose. What does this mean for those who previously completed their one- or two-dose vaccine sequence? What research and process did the FDA implement to determine that booster shots are important? Here are the facts you need to know.**

**FACT: Booster shots are important to maximize the protection COVID-19 vaccines provide.**

While the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the U.S. continue to be remarkably effective in reducing the risk of severe disease, hospitalization and death, available data show that protection against COVID-19 begins to decrease over time. According to the latest assessment by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the current protection could diminish in the months ahead, especially among those who are at higher risk or were vaccinated during the earlier phases of the vaccination rollout. By getting a booster shot, you can maximize vaccine-induced protection and prolong its durability.

**FACT: Booster shots are available for those 18 or older who meet certain criteria.**

Those who have finished their single dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine at least two months ago or their two-dose Pfizer or Moderna vaccine series at least six months ago and who meet the following criteria are eligible for a booster shot: those age 65 or older, those age 18 or older that have any of many underlying medical conditions, and those age 18 or older who live or work in a setting that places them at risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Those age 18 or older with underlying medical conditions should talk with their healthcare providers to see if they qualify for a booster shot. It's important to note that your booster shot does not have to match your primary dose series. This means if you received the two-dose Pfizer vaccine series, you can receive Moderna or Johnson and Johnson for your booster dose.

**FACT: A booster shot is different from a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.**

Sometimes immunocompromised people do not build enough protection against a vaccination, and a third, or additional, dose can help them build more immunity against the disease. This is different from a booster shot, which is an additional dose for those who have built enough protection after their vaccination but then that protection decreases over time. Booster doses are needed to add protection after time has passed and the initial protection has decreased.

**FACT: As with all COVID-19 vaccines, booster shots went through rigorous testing and development to assure their safety and effectiveness.**

After initial development, vaccines must go through clinical trials to ensure their safety and effectiveness. The clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccines involved tens of thousands of volunteers of different ages, races and ethnicities. Because COVID-19 continues to be widespread, the vaccine clinical trials have gathered the data more quickly than if the disease were less common; however, none of the trial phases were skipped. The FDA and CDC have followed this process and thoroughly reviewed data to determine a booster shot helps increase protection in certain populations. The COVID-19 vaccines have been thoroughly tested and have proved to be effective, especially against severe illness, hospitalization and death. The vaccines have continuous and intense safety monitoring, and more than 350 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been given in the U.S.

**FACT: You should continue to take other safety measures after receiving the booster shot.**

Breakthrough infections do happen but being vaccinated helps protect you from the more severe symptoms that could result in hospitalization or death. Even those who have received booster shots should protect themselves and others by practicing good hand hygiene, wearing face masks and social distancing in public gatherings. Avoiding large gatherings completely will further reduce your risk.

Schedule your vaccination appointment on the MyOchsner portal today. Visit [ochsner.org/vaccine](https://ochsner.org/vaccine) for more facts, or call **844-888-2772** with any additional questions. For more COVID-19 information and resources, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov)) or the Louisiana Department of Health ([ldh.la.gov](https://ldh.la.gov)) website.

