

COVID Vaccines – Third Doses & Boosters

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized third doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for people with certain health conditions that compromise their immune systems. Studies have shown that two doses may not have provided the desired protection for this group, who are more likely to get seriously ill with COVID-19.

If you aren't eligible to receive a third dose and have completed the COVID vaccine series, you may be eligible to receive a booster. The CDC has approved boosters of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for individuals 18 and older who have completed the two-dose series. Johnson & Johnson boosters are available to individuals 18 and older who have already received one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Which primary vaccine series did you complete?	Pfizer	Moderna	Johnson & Johnson
You can get a booster if:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ages 18 and older who completed the two-dose series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ages 18 and older who completed the two-dose series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ages 18 and older who previously received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine
You are eligible:	6 months following completion of the initial two-dose series	6 months following completion of the initial two-dose series	2 months following the initial vaccine

Q: Why is the timeline for receiving a third dose different for immunocompromised people?

A: Fully vaccinated, immunocompromised people make up a large proportion of hospitalized breakthrough cases. They may also be more likely to transmit COVID-19 to household members. Immunocompromised people commonly require different vaccine considerations than "healthy" individuals.

Q: What medical conditions make me eligible to receive a third dose of Pfizer or Moderna?

A: You may be eligible if you have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last two years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system (Check with your doctor to see if any of your medications qualify)
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome or Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune system

Talk with your doctor about your medical condition and whether getting a third dose is appropriate for you.

Q: When will the general public be able to get a booster shot?

A: On November 18, 2021, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) announced all fully vaccinated Kansans over the age of 18 are eligible for COVID-19 booster doses. You are eligible and encouraged to receive a booster if:

- You are at least 18 years old **and** have met the 6-month time period following the primary vaccination series for the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, or it has been at least 2 months since your Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
- Your assessment of risk exposure may include, but is not limited to, those who work with the public or live with someone who works with the public, live or work with someone at high risk of severe impact of COVID, live in geographic areas that have been heavily impacted by COVID, reside in high transmission areas, live in congregate setting, experience social inequity or other risk conditions. Currently, there is a high risk of community transmission in all Kansas counties. Vaccine providers should allow patients to self-determine their risk of exposure.

Q: Where should I go to get my booster shot?

A: You'll be able to get your booster shot in many of the same places that were available for the first doses. These include your primary care provider, Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health and many local pharmacies. A complete list is available at lmh.org/vaccine, douglascountyks.org/coronavirus or at vaccinefinder.org/search.

Q: Do I need to sign up on a list to be notified when booster doses are available?

A: No. Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health and LMH Health will not be using a notification list for booster doses. Visit ldchealth.org/covidvaccine to register for a time to receive your booster dose.

Q: I would like to receive my booster shot as soon as I can. Could receiving the booster shot earlier than the suggested timeline cause negative effects?

A: We are still learning more about the recommended timeline for healthy individuals to receive a booster shot. The recommendation will be based on data from extensive trials and should be followed closely in order to achieve the intended results of increased protection.

Q: If I need a booster, does that mean the vaccine isn't working?

A: No. The COVID-19 vaccines are working very well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization and death against the delta variant. However, experts are starting to see reduced protection against mild and moderate disease caused by the variant. A booster will help to maximize and prolong your protection.

Q: What's the difference between a third dose and a booster shot? Aren't they the same thing?

A: The medication for both the third dose and the booster is the same, though the purposes are different.

Immunocompromised people may not develop the same level of immune response after vaccination as others. A third dose is recommended for those individuals to help them build the same level of immunity as people who aren't immunocompromised.

A booster shot is one that's given to people who had an adequate immune response to the primary vaccine series as its protection decreases over time.

Q: I thought that Pfizer and Moderna were both a two-shot series and that Johnson & Johnson was one shot. Why do I need a booster dose?

A: Although both of the vaccines are highly effective against severe illness, hospitalization and death, their effectiveness starts to decrease over time. A booster dose increases the protection the vaccine provides.

Q: Does my third shot have to be the same as my first two or can I mix them?

A: You may choose which vaccine you receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type they originally received and others may prefer to get a different booster. See the chart on page 1 to determine if you're eligible to receive a booster dose.