

Pennsylvania News of Health

Get A Boost Against COVID: What You Need To Know About Boosters

by the *We Can Do This*

COVID-19 Public Education Campaign

(NAPS)—COVID vaccines and boosters have reduced the threat of COVID, allowing many people to gather, travel, and celebrate with more peace of mind. Vaccines and boosters provide the best protection against the worst outcomes of COVID, yet people still have many questions around boosters.

“We’ve entered a new phase of the pandemic and we know more about the virus than ever before,” said Dr. Mohamed Yassin, chief of infectious diseases at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Mercy in Pittsburgh, PA. “We know that vaccines provide the best protection from COVID-related hospitalization and death. Boosters then add an extra layer of protection.”

Here is what people should know about the COVID boosters:

Boosters provide the best protection against severe illness and death. Over time, vaccines may become less effective at preventing COVID, and just because you’ve had COVID doesn’t mean you can’t get it again. Getting boosted extends your protection and keeps you safer from emerging variants. A booster shot is another dose that—as the name suggests—boosts immunity to the virus as time passes. Vaccinated people who have also had a booster are less likely to get sick; but if they do catch the virus, the illness is usually less severe. For adults ages 65 or older, boosters can more than double their protection.

Vaccines and boosters protect vulnerable populations against COVID. Everyone 5 or older who has completed their initial COVID vaccination series should get a booster. Individuals who are up to date on COVID vaccines not only receive protection for themselves, but they also help reduce the spread of COVID to people who are at high risk due to age or compromised immune systems.

Second boosters provide added protection for people at higher risk. Adults age 50 or older and immuno-



It’s still vital for Pennsylvanians to protect themselves and their loved ones from COVID.

compromised individuals can improve their protection even more with a second booster. CDC recommends second boosters, with either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, for:

- People age 50 or older who got their first booster four months or more ago,
- People who got a Johnson & Johnson vaccine and their first booster with a Johnson & Johnson dose at least four months ago,
- Residents of long-term care settings,
- People with certain underlying medical conditions that impact their immune systems, and
- Pregnant and recently pregnant people.

Boosters are readily available to all vaccinated people ages 5 years or older. Just like the vaccines, booster shots are available at no cost to anyone living in the U.S. People who got Pfizer or Moderna vaccines should get a booster five months after the initial doses. Vaccinated adults 18 or older may choose any available vaccine as a booster, regardless of the type or brand of vaccine received previously. Only the Pfizer vaccine is available as a booster for those ages 5 to 17.

Learn More

For more information and to find a vaccine, visit www.vaccines.gov.