



# COVID-19 Vaccines for People Who Are Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised

Updated Oct. 24, 2022

## What You Need to Know

- If you are [moderately or severely immunocompromised](#) (have a weakened immune system), you are at increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness and death. Additionally, your immune response to COVID-19 vaccination may not be as strong as in people who are not immunocompromised.
- As with vaccines for other diseases, you are protected best when you stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines as described below.
  - CDC recommends everyone ages 5 years and older get an [updated COVID-19 booster](#) to help restore protection that has decreased since your last vaccine. One updated booster dose is recommended for all people ages 5 years and older, regardless of whether or not they are immunocompromised.
  - CDC recommends that people with moderate or severe immunocompromise get an extra primary series dose if receiving the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech series.
- Use [CDC’s COVID-19 booster tool](#) to learn if and when you can get boosters to stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines.
- You can self-attest to your moderately or severely immunocompromised status, which means you do not need any documentation of your status in order to receive COVID-19 vaccine doses you might be eligible to receive.
- You may also be eligible for [EVUSHELD™](#), a medicine given by your healthcare provider every six months to help prevent you from getting COVID-19.

## Pre-teens, Teens and Adults Who Are Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised

### Pfizer-BioNTech



AGE GROUP  
12-17 YEARS

1st Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

3 weeks after 1st dose

3rd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

At least 4 weeks after 2nd dose

4th Dose

UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER  
At least 2 months after 3rd dose  
or last booster

Up to Date: Immediately after the most recent booster recommended for you [\[1\]](#)

AGE GROUP  
18 YEARS AND OLDER

1st Dose  
PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose  
PRIMARY SERIES  
3 weeks after 1st dose

3rd Dose  
PRIMARY SERIES  
At least 4 weeks after 2nd dose

4th Dose  
UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER  
At least 2 months after 3rd dose  
or last booster

Up to Date: Immediately after the most recent booster recommended for you [\[1\]](#)

Moderna



AGE GROUP  
18 YEARS AND OLDER

1st Dose  
PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose  
PRIMARY SERIES  
4 weeks after 1st dose

3rd Dose  
PRIMARY SERIES  
At least 4 weeks after 2nd dose

4th Dose  
UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER  
At least 2 months after 3rd dose  
or last booster

Up to Date: Immediately after the most recent booster recommended for you [\[1\]](#)

AGE GROUP  
12–17 YEARS

1st Dose  
PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose  
PRIMARY SERIES  
4 weeks after 1st dose

3rd Dose  
PRIMARY SERIES  
At least 4 weeks after 2nd dose

4th Dose

UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER

At least 2 months after 3rd dose or last booster

Up to Date: Immediately after the most recent booster recommended for you <sup>[1]</sup>

Johnson & Johnson's Janssen



AGE GROUP

18 YEARS AND OLDER

1st Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose

ADDITIONAL DOSE

At least 4 weeks after 1st dose and should be Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna

3rd Dose

UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER

At least 2 months after 2nd dose or last booster

Up to Date: Immediately after you have received the most recent booster recommended for you <sup>[1]</sup>

Novavax



AGE GROUP

18 YEARS AND OLDER

1st Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

3 weeks after 1st dose

3rd Dose

UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER

At least 2 months after 2nd dose

A monovalent Novavax booster is available in limited situations  
More details: [Novavax booster](#)

Up to Date: Immediately after you have received the most recent booster recommended for you <sup>[1]</sup>

AGE GROUP

12-17 YEARS

1st Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

3 weeks after 1st dose

3rd Dose

UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER

At least 2 months after 2nd dose

**Up to Date:** Immediately after you have received the most recent booster recommended for you <sup>[1]</sup>

# Children Ages 6 Months-11 Years Who Are Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised

Pfizer-BioNTech



AGE GROUP

5–11 YEARS

1st Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

3 weeks after 1st dose

3rd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

At least 4 weeks after 2nd dose

4th Dose

UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER

At least 2 months after 3rd dose

**Up to Date:** Immediately after you have received the most recent booster recommended for you <sup>[1]</sup>

AGE GROUP

6 MONTHS–4 YEARS

1st Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

3 weeks after 1st dose

3rd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

At least 8 weeks after 2nd dose

**Up to Date:** 2 weeks after 3rd dose in primary series, since a booster is not recommended for this age group at this time

Moderna



AGE GROUP

6 MONTHS–5 YEARS

1st Dose

2nd Dose

3rd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

PRIMARY SERIES

PRIMARY SERIES

4 weeks after 1st dose

At least 4 weeks after 2nd dose

4th Dose

UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER

Children 5 years of age can get a Pfizer-BioNTech booster at least 2 months after their 3rd dose. (Children 6 months to 4 years are not recommended for a booster.)

**Up to Date:** Children 6 months to 4 years are up to date two weeks after completing the 3<sup>rd</sup> dose of their primary series. Children 5 years of age who received a Moderna primary series are up to date immediately after they have received the most recent booster recommended for them.

AGE GROUP

6–11 YEARS

1st Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

2nd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

3rd Dose

PRIMARY SERIES

4 weeks after 1st dose

At least 4 weeks after 2nd dose

4th Dose

UPDATED (BIVALENT) BOOSTER

At least 2 months after 3rd dose

**Up to Date:** Immediately after you have received the most recent booster recommended for you. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If you have completed your primary series—but are not yet eligible for a booster—you are also considered up to date.

To find COVID-19 vaccine locations near you: Search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233.

# Who Is Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised?

Some people are [immunocompromised](#) (have a weakened immune system) due to a medical condition or from receipt of immunosuppressive medications or treatments. Examples of medical conditions or treatments that may result in moderate to severe immunocompromise include **but are not limited to:**

- Active treatment for solid tumor and hematologic malignancies
- Hematologic malignancies associated with poor responses to COVID-19 vaccines regardless of current treatment status (e.g., chronic lymphocytic leukemia, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, multiple myeloma, acute leukemia)
- Receipt of solid-organ transplant or an islet transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy
- Receipt of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-T-cell therapy or hematopoietic stem cell transplant (within 2 years of transplantation or taking immunosuppressive therapy)

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- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g., common variable immunodeficiency disease, severe combined immunodeficiency, DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
  - Advanced or untreated HIV infection (people with HIV and CD4 cell counts less than 200/mm3, history of an AIDS-defining illness without immune reconstitution, or clinical manifestations of symptomatic HIV)
  - Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids (i.e., 20 or more mg of prednisone or equivalent per day when administered for 2 or more weeks), alkylating agents, antimetabolites, transplant-related immunosuppressive drugs, cancer chemotherapeutic agents classified as severely immunosuppressive, tumor necrosis factor (TNF) blockers, and other biologic agents that are immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory

Talk to your healthcare provider about COVID-19 and your medical condition.

If you are moderately or severely immunocompromised or severely allergic to COVID-19 vaccines, you may be eligible for [pre-exposure prophylaxis with EVUSHELD™](#). EVUSHELD™ is a medicine given every six months by your healthcare provider to help prevent you from getting COVID-19. EVUSHELD™ may offer less protection against [three strains](#) (BA.4.6, BF.7, and BA.2.75.2) of the Omicron variant. It is important to use [multiple prevention measures](#) and talk to your healthcare provider to find out if EVUSHELD™ is right for you.

**Download:** [EVUSHELD™ EUA Fact Sheet for Patients, Parents and Caregivers](#) [↗](#)

## People Who Were Vaccinated Outside of the United States

People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised and who received COVID-19 vaccines not available in the United States should either complete or restart the recommended COVID-19 vaccine series, including a booster, in the United States. For more information, talk to your healthcare provider, or see the [COVID-19 Interim Clinical Considerations](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

[Can you mix the vaccines for your mRNA primary vaccination series?](#) [↕](#)

No, vaccines used for the primary vaccination series should be the same product or brand. However, if the mRNA vaccine product given for the first two doses is not available or is unknown, either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) may be administered for the third primary dose.

[What are the benefits of a third primary dose for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised and received two doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine?](#) [↕](#)

A third primary dose may prevent serious and possibly life-threatening COVID-19 in people who may not have responded to their two-dose mRNA COVID-19 vaccine primary series. People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised who have low or no protection after two doses of mRNA vaccines may have an improved immune response after a third primary dose of the same vaccine.

[What are the risks of vaccinating people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised with a third primary dose?](#) [↕](#)

The safety, effectiveness, and benefit of the third primary dose in people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised continues to be evaluated. So far, reactions reported after the third primary dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine are similar to those of the two-dose primary series. Fatigue and pain at the injection site were the most commonly reported side effects—and overall, most symptoms were mild and temporary.

As with the two-dose primary series, [serious side effects are rare](#), but may occur.

What is the difference between a third primary dose and a booster?



For people who are immunocompromised, the third primary dose is the final dose of the primary series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. Boosters are shots that enhance or restore protection against COVID-19, which may have decreased over time.

When are people who have weakened immune systems considered up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines?



People can stay [up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccination by completing a primary series and receiving the most recent booster dose recommended for them by CDC. The people you live or spend time with can help protect you and themselves by staying up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines too.

When are people who have weakened immune systems considered up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines?



People can stay [up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccination by completing a primary series and receiving the most recent booster dose recommended for them by CDC. The people you live or spend time with can help protect you and themselves by staying up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines too.

Do people who are up to date and get sick with COVID-19 need to get more COVID-19 vaccines immediately?



You are up to date if you receive all COVID-19 vaccine doses recommended for you, even if you become ill with COVID-19. You do not need to be re-vaccinated or receive an additional booster.



For Healthcare and Public Health

- [Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized or Approved in the United States](#)

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