

# Q&A: Additional COVID-19 Vaccine Doses for Immunocompromised Patients

## Background

On August 13, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup recommended a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for [certain immunocompromised groups](#). These groups are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19 and may benefit from an additional dose.

## Why is an additional dose recommended?

While the vaccines are 90 percent effective against most coronavirus variants, studies show that people who are immunocompromised do not always build strong immunity. In addition, they are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. The additional dose can help improve their body's response to the initial two-dose vaccine series. **It is not considered a booster dose.**

## Who qualifies for an additional dose at this time?

Certain immunocompromised groups, including people who:

- Are 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 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Have moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Have advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Are receiving active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress the immune response.

People who are not immunocompromised should not receive an additional dose of any COVID-19 vaccine at this time.

## What's next?

People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised and received an mRNA vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer) should receive a third dose. The additional dose:

- Should be given at least 28 days after the second dose

- Be the same vaccine brand as the rest of the series, if possible. (However, it is okay to receive the other mRNA vaccine brand.)

## Do Johnson & Johnson recipients need a second dose?

People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised and received the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine, should not get an additional dose of the J&J vaccine or a dose of an mRNA vaccine at this time.

## Where can I find more information?

For other options, reach out to [Clinical Immunization Safety Assessment \(CISA\) Project](#).

You can also see:

- [The Department of Health's guidance statement for health care providers](#)
- [CDC's news release](#) on ACIP's recommendation
- [FDA's news release](#) on the additional dose
- [CDC Clinical Outreach and Communication Activity \(COCA\) call](#) on August 17, 2021