



COVID-19 Vaccines - Frequently Asked Questions FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE IMMUNOCOMPROMISED



Why do people with weak immune systems need more doses?

People with [moderately or severely weakened immune systems](#) (e.g., blood-related cancers or certain treatments for cancer, organ transplants, and certain autoimmune conditions) are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. They are more likely to get COVID-19 than people with normal immune systems. And if they get infected, they are more likely to get very ill and spread the virus to others.

In addition, some people with weak immune systems don't build enough protection from the standard COVID-19 primary series. Because of this, it is recommended that they get more doses of vaccine plus getting some of those doses at shorter time intervals.

How many doses should I get?

If you have a moderately or severely weakened immune system, you should get an additional COVID-19 vaccine dose to complete your *primary series*. This means a total of:

- 3 doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine - OR –
- 1 dose of the J&J vaccine and then one dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine [you must be 18 or older to receive a J&J vaccine].

You should get one booster dose if you:

- Are 5-11 years of age and received the Pfizer vaccine for your primary series. This means a total of 4 doses (3 dose primary series +1 booster dose).

You should get two booster doses if you:

- Are 12-17 and you received the Pfizer vaccine. This means a total of 5 doses (3 dose primary series + 2 booster doses).
- Are 18 years of age and older and received either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. This means a total of 5 doses (3 dose primary series + 2 booster doses).
- Are 18 years of age and older and received the J&J vaccine for your initial dose. This means a total of 4 doses (2 dose primary series+ 2 booster doses).

Booster doses are not currently recommended for immunocompromised children aged 6 months through 4 years nor for children age 5-17 who receive the Moderna vaccine.

Visit the CDC interactive [Getting your COVID-19 Booster](#) tool to help determine when you (or your child) can get one or more COVID-19 boosters.

Ask your doctor about the best timing of your additional and/or booster dose(s) based on your current treatment plan. This is especially important if you are about to start or restart immunosuppressive treatment.

See the DPH [COVID-19 Vaccine Schedule](#) at ph.lacounty.gov/covidvaccineschedules for information on all recommended primary and booster doses for people who are immunocompromised.





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What other steps should I take to protect myself?

It is important to take other steps to protect yourself from COVID-19 in addition to getting the COVID-19 vaccine:

- **Talk to your doctor about medicine to prevent COVID-19.** A medicine called Evusheld is now available to prevent COVID-19 infection in people who can't build enough protection from the vaccine alone. It is given as 2 separate injections into the buttocks during a single visit. It can be given to people age 12 and over who weigh at least 88 pounds. For more information, see the webpage ph.lacounty.gov/covidmedicines.
- **Wear a protective mask** such as a well-fitting respirator (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94) or a [double mask](#) for a higher level of protection. Avoid crowded indoor places or spaces with poor air flow when possible. For details, see ph.lacounty.gov/reducerisk and ph.lacounty.gov/masks.
- **Encourage the people that you spend time with to help protect you.** They should stay [up to date](#) with their COVID-19 vaccines, get a [2nd booster](#) if eligible, and take other steps to [reduce their risk](#) of getting and passing COVID-19 to you.

Where can I get more information?



- To print or view this FAQ or FAQs on other COVID-19 vaccine topics, scan the QR code or visit [COVID-19 vaccine FAQs](#).
- [VaccinateLACounty.com](https://vaccinate.lacounty.gov) – including [COVID-19 Vaccine Schedules](#) with graphics to show when each dose is due and information on [How to Get Vaccinated](#).
- See the CDC webpage [COVID-19 Vaccines for Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised People](#) to learn more.
- Talk to your doctor if you have questions.

