

# COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters Toolkit for Employers

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) wants Alaska's employers to know: **Everyone age 5 or older can get a COVID-19 vaccine booster if enough time has passed since their first vaccine shots.**

## Why are booster shots important?

COVID-19 immunity, from vaccines and prior infection, wanes over time. While initial vaccinations still provide protection, booster shots keep that protection strong and long-lasting – especially as new coronavirus variants emerge, like the omicron variant. That's why [vaccine guidelines have been broadened](#) to allow everyone 5 or older to receive booster shots.

A [study](#) released in February 2022 showed that fully vaccinated people who haven't gotten a booster shot were 5.3 times less likely to be hospitalized by COVID-19 than unvaccinated people. But people who got their booster were much better protected: boosted people were 23 times less likely to be hospitalized than unvaccinated people. Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccination is critical for protecting against severe illness.

## Employers play a vital role in the health of their employees

**DHSS values the essential role employers, managers, and human resources professionals play in delivering important public health messages.** Your employees depend on you to provide information related to workplace health and safety, and in doing so, you've cultivated a unique relationship of trust.

With a shared interest in keeping your employees well-informed and healthy, DHSS is making available a **COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters Toolkit** for employers. This toolkit provides easy-to-use materials for any organization that wants to inform their workforce about booster shots. Organizations are free to use all or parts of the toolkit however they see fit.

## Thank you!

Throughout this pandemic, employers across Alaska have endured unprecedented economic disruption and made an incredible effort to keep our state safe and healthy. **At this stage, the most important action we can take is to encourage personal protection through booster shots and vaccinations.**

Thanks for all you do to keep Alaskans safe.

*May 2022*

## **What's in the toolkit?**

### **Flyer: Boost Your Protection**

This flyer can be shared digitally or printed out and posted in common areas, such as staff breakrooms, restrooms, bulletin boards, or other highly visible spaces.

### **Info sheet: Answers to Common Questions about COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters**

This info sheet answers common questions about booster shots and can be a useful resource to guide conversations with employees. The info sheet can be shared digitally or printed out then distributed and posted.

### **Template email to employees**

This template email is an example of a message that could be shared with employees. Feel free to use all or parts of this message, or to adjust the language to suit your organization's needs. This template email can also provide talking points for in-person conversations.

### **Communications checklist**

This checklist suggests ideas for how to promote accurate information about COVID-19 vaccine boosters for your staff.

# BOOST YOUR PROTECTION

Everyone 5+ should get a free COVID-19 vaccine booster when it's time.

Initial vaccine received	Pfizer	Moderna	J&J
When to get a booster	5 months after completion of second dose	5 months after completion of second dose	2 months after completion of single dose
Who is eligible	Anyone 5 years or older who has completed the two-dose series	Anyone 18 years or older who has completed the two-dose series	Anyone 18 years or older who has received a single dose
Booster options	5-17: Pfizer 18 or older: Pfizer or Moderna	Moderna or Pfizer	Pfizer or Moderna

## Why get a booster?

COVID-19 vaccines are working well to prevent hospitalizations and deaths from severe COVID-19. But over time, public health experts have seen reduced protection. A booster makes that protection stronger and longer-lasting.

## Which booster is right for me?

Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are preferred by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## How do I get a booster?

COVID-19 vaccine boosters are available at most pharmacies and provider offices in Alaska.



Visit [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov) to find a vaccine provider near you.

Learn more: Visit [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov) or call the Alaska vaccine hotline at 907-646-3322.



May 2022

# ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINE BOOSTERS

## Who can get a COVID-19 vaccine booster?

Everyone 5 or older should get a COVID-19 vaccine booster if it's been six months since receiving the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, or two months since receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

## Why do I need a booster?

COVID-19 vaccines are working well to prevent hospitalizations and deaths from severe COVID-19. But over time, public health experts have seen reduced protection. A booster makes that protection stronger and longer-lasting.

## How much does a booster cost?

All COVID-19 vaccinations, including booster shots, are free for everyone. Vaccine providers may seek reimbursement from your health insurance provider, but they can't pass that cost to you.

## Which booster should I get?

Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are preferred by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). People ages 18 or older can choose which vaccine they want to receive as a booster dose. People ages 5 to 17 can only receive the Pfizer vaccine for their booster.

## Are boosters made with the same formula as the vaccines?

Yes. The booster doses have the same ingredients as the initial vaccine doses. However, in the case of the Moderna booster, it is half the dose of the vaccine people get for their primary series.

## What are the side effects from boosters?

So far, reactions reported after getting a booster shot are similar to those of initial vaccinations. The most common side effects are fever, headache, fatigue, and pain at the injection site. These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection, and they should go away in a few days.

## How can I relieve side effects after my booster shot?

Drink plenty of fluids and dress lightly to reduce discomfort or fever. You can take over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, to relieve side effects. However, it is not recommended to take these medicines before vaccination for the purpose of trying to prevent side effects, as it's unclear if these medications affect how well the vaccines work.



### **How long does it take for my booster to start working?**

Your body's immune response kicks in almost immediately after a booster dose. It may take around two weeks to reach maximum protection.

### **Can I get a flu shot at the same time I get a COVID-19 vaccine booster?**

Yes. You can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines, including a flu vaccine, at the same visit. Experience with other vaccines has shown that the way our bodies develop protection and possible side effects after getting vaccinated is generally the same when given alone or with other vaccines.

### **Can I get a booster while I am currently sick with COVID-19?**

No. If you are currently sick with COVID-19, wait to get your booster until you have recovered from your illness and are out of isolation. If you're experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or recently have been exposed to a known case of COVID-19, stay home and get tested before getting a booster.

### **Am I still considered "fully vaccinated" if I don't get a booster?**

Yes. Everyone is still considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Staying up to date with booster shots is important to maximize your protection against serious illness.

### **How do I get a booster?**

COVID-19 vaccine boosters are available at most pharmacies and provider offices in Alaska.



**Make an appointment online at [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov)  
or [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov), or call the Alaska vaccine hotline: 907-646-3322**



## Template for email to employees

This template email is an example of a message that could be shared with employees. Feel free to use all or parts of this message, or to adjust the language to suit your organization's needs. This template email can also provide talking points for in-person conversations.

---

**Subject:** A note about COVID-19 vaccine boosters

As you may have heard, COVID-19 vaccine boosters are now available for anyone 5 or older if enough time has passed since the first series of shots – five months after Pfizer or Moderna, and two months after Johnson & Johnson. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services advises anyone who is eligible for a booster to get one for their personal protection.

COVID-19 immunity, from vaccines and prior infection, wanes over time. While initial vaccinations still provide protection, booster shots keep that protection strong and long-lasting. One study showed that fully vaccinated people who haven't gotten a booster shot were 5.3 times less likely to be hospitalized by COVID-19 than unvaccinated people. But people who got their booster were much better protected: boosted people were 23 times less likely to be hospitalized than unvaccinated people. Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccination is critical for protecting against severe illness.

**If you're vaccinated and enough time has passed, [business name/management team name/manager/we/I] support[s] your decision to get a booster shot. [We/I] will work to accommodate your schedule to ensure you can get your booster as soon as possible.**

[Business name/management team name/manager/we/I] [are/am] so grateful for the effort our employees have put into making our workplace as safe as possible throughout this pandemic. For those who are vaccinated, getting a booster is another important step we can take right now to keep each other healthy. [We/I] want you to know that you will be fully supported in that decision.

To learn more about COVID-19 vaccine boosters, you can refer to the attached materials from Alaska DHSS. For questions, feel free to reach out to [us/me/human resources] at [contact information].

Make an appointment today: visit [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov) to find a vaccine provider near you. You can also call the Alaska COVID-19 helpline at 907-646-3322 or email [covidquestions@alaska.gov](mailto:covidquestions@alaska.gov). If you're not vaccinated and would like more information, resources are available at [covidvax.alaska.gov](https://covidvax.alaska.gov).

Thank you for everything you do!

Sincerely,

[name]

## COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters Communications Checklist

This checklist suggests ideas for how to promote information about COVID-19 vaccine boosters for your staff. Please feel free to implement what works best for your workplace.

- ☐ Communicate where, when, and how personnel can receive the vaccine.
- ☐ Post COVID-19 vaccine booster educational materials (posters, info sheets) in staff break rooms and common areas in your health facility.
- ☐ Post COVID-19 vaccine booster information through employee websites.
- ☐ Share regular staff updates on COVID-19 vaccination and booster efforts (staff meetings, email blasts).
- ☐ Share any plans to support personnel needing time away from work if they are experiencing any expected post-vaccine side effects (posters and flyers in break rooms, staff meetings, email blasts).
- ☐ Share testimonials from personnel who volunteer to speak about why they got vaccinated or boosted and promote them among staff, such as on the intranet or internet, in staff meetings, and on social media (blog posts, etc.).
- ☐ Recognize personnel who have been effective vaccine promoters (staff meetings, email blasts, social media, blog posts).
- ☐ Create and publicize a feedback mechanism for staff members to ask questions or receive guidance about COVID-19 vaccination and boosters (email inbox, phone number, point of contact).