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 Pfzer 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* *or vaccines.gov*, or call the Alaska vaccine hotline: 907-646-3322