

September 24, 2021

We are pleased to report that each Federal vaccine approval agency has completed a review of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine data. Upon completion of review, the agencies moved to endorse booster shots in certain populations, including long-term care residents (LTC) and others 65 and older, healthcare workers and those with underlying medical conditions that could put them at risk for contracting COVID-19. Today, the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup has also completed its review of the federal process and has endorsed approval, allowing the Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot after 6 months in California, Nevada, Washington, and Oregon.

Q: Who is eligible for a booster dose of the Pfizer-Biotech COVID-19 vaccine according to CDC?

A: The recommendation for a booster dose **applies only to the Pfizer vaccine and to those individuals who received Pfizer** as their initial vaccine series:

- Individuals 65 years and older and residents in LTC settings **should** receive a booster
- Individuals aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions **should** receive a booster
- People aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions **may** receive a booster based on their individual benefits and risks
- People aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting **may** receive a booster based on their individual benefits and risks.

Q: When should a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine be given to those who completed the initial vaccine series?

A: The FDA recommends a booster **at least 6 months after** completing their Pfizer vaccine primary series (which was two doses given three weeks apart).

Q: What are some examples of underlying medical conditions that should be considered in individuals 50-64 years to make them a candidate for a booster dose?

A: Examples are cancer, chronic kidney disease, chronic lung diseases, dementia, diabetes, Down syndrome, heart conditions, HIV, liver disease, obesity, pregnancy, immunocompromised state, sickle cell, smoking history, organ transplant, stroke, and substance use disorders.

These are not all the potential medical conditions that could make an individual more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19. We recommend discussing questions around boosters with your healthcare provider.

Q: When is an individual eligible to get a booster dose if they received either the Moderna or Johnson and Johnson vaccine?

A: Only data for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has been reviewed. The FDA and CDC are expected to review data for the Moderna and Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccines in the upcoming weeks. Individuals that received either the Moderna or Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for the initial series are encouraged to wait to receive a booster dose. Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson and Johnson vaccines are NOT interchangeable.

Medical experts continue to emphasize that all COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant.

Q: What is the difference between a third dose and a booster dose?

A: **Third dose:** People who are **moderately- severely immunocompromised** should receive a third dose of the same mRNA vaccine after the initial two dose series. The third dose should be given at least 4 weeks following the second dose. A third dose is recommended because the immune response to the first and second dose may not have been sufficient due to immunocompromised health status. Third doses are approved under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for both mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna).

Booster: Certain people that had a sufficient immune response to the Pfizer primary vaccine series are now eligible through the amended EUA to receive a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine at least 6 months after completion of the second dose in the series. A booster dose is intended to boost an immune response that may have waned over time. Moderna and Janssen (J and J) are not yet approved for a booster as the data must be reviewed by the FDA.

Q: How do I get vaccine for residents and staff?

A: Customers that are actively enrolled in the Consonus Continuity Program may start ordering vaccine. Customers not yet enrolled should activate now. If you have questions about how you can order the COVID-19 VaccPack from Consonus Pharmacy, please contact your consultant nurse or pharmacist. You may also email vaccineorders@consonushealth.com or refer to Vaccine Activation FAQs on our website.

In addition, please continue to make vaccination of currently unvaccinated individuals your TOP priority. The key to ending this pandemic is to get more people vaccinated to help stop variants from spreading AND prevent new variants from emerging.