CDC Recommends COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters for Many

Recommendation includes people over 65, those with underlying medical conditions and those with occupational risk.

September 24, 2021 By Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Today, Centers for Disease Contol and Prevention (CDC) director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, endorsed the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation for a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in certain populations and also recommended a booster dose for those in high risk occupational and institutional settings. The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) authorization and CDC's guidance for use are important steps forward as we work to stay ahead of the virus and keep Americans safe.

This updated interim guidance from CDC allows for millions of Americans who are at highest risk for COVID-19 to receive a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 booster shot to help increase their protection.

CDC recommends:

- people 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings **should** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series,
- people aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions **should** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series,
- people aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions **may** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks, and
- 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 shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's

COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks.

Many of the people who are now eligible to receive a booster shot received their initial vaccine early in the vaccination program and will benefit from additional protection. With the Delta variant's dominance as the circulating strain and cases of COVID-19 increasing significantly across the United States, a booster shot will help strengthen protection against severe disease in those populations who are at high-risk for exposure to COVID-19 or the complications from severe disease.

CDC will continue to monitor the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines to ensure appropriate recommendations to keep all Americans safe. We will also evaluate with similar urgency available data in the coming weeks to swiftly make additional recommendations for other populations or people who got the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

"As CDC director, it is my job to recognize where our actions can have the greatest impact. At CDC, we are tasked with analyzing complex, often imperfect data to make concrete recommendations that optimize health. In a pandemic, even with uncertainty, we must take actions that we anticipate will do the greatest good," Walensky said.

"I believe we can best serve the nation's public health needs by providing booster doses for the elderly, those in long-term care facilities, people with underlying medical conditions, and for adults at high risk of disease from occupational and institutional exposures to COVID-19. This aligns with the FDA's booster authorization and makes these groups eligible for a booster shot. Today, ACIP only reviewed data for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. We will address, with the same sense of urgency, recommendations for the Moderna and J&J vaccines as soon as those data are available.

While today's action was an initial step related to booster shots, it will not distract from our most important focus of primary vaccination in the United States and around the world. I want to thank ACIP for their thoughtful discussion and scientific deliberation on the current data which informed my recommendation.

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