

COVID-19 BOOSTERS - TALKING POINTS AND FAQs - 10/22/21

- Eligible Massachusetts residents can now access Pfizer, Moderna and Jansen COVID-19 booster shots.
- Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 booster shots are now available to:
 - Individuals 65 years and older
 - Individuals 18+ who live in [long-term care settings](#)
 - Individuals 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](#)
 - Individuals 18+ who work or live in [high-risk settings](#)
- Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 booster shots are now available to:
 - All individuals 18 and older who received a single dose of the Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at least 2 months ago.
- CDC recommendations now allow for mixing and matching of different COVID-19 booster doses.
 - Eligible individuals may choose which booster vaccine they want. Some people may want the type they originally received; others may prefer to get a different booster.
 - The Administration recommends that residents with questions about which booster is right for them should ask their health care provider for advice.
- COVID-19 booster doses are available at over 460 locations, including over 450 retail pharmacies, and [state sponsored COVID-19 booster locations](#), with appointments available now.

How to Get a Booster

- Visit the VaxFinder tool at vaxfinder.mass.gov for a full list of locations. You can narrow results to search for locations that are offering boosters, with appointments available now for booking. Many locations are booking appointments out weeks in advance.
- For individuals unable to use VaxFinder, or have difficulty accessing the internet, the COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Line (Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM, Saturday and Sunday 9 AM-2 PM) is available by calling 2-1-1 and following the prompts for assistance. The COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Line is available in English and Spanish and has translators available to in approximately 100 additional languages.
- As a reminder COVID-19 can be given at the same time as your annual flu shot. If you are now eligible for a COVID-19 booster dose and have not received your annual flu shot yet, ask your health care provider or pharmacist for both vaccines.
- Individuals can check if they are eligible for a booster at mass.gov/BoosterCheck.
- More info at mass.gov/COVID19booster.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need a booster?

COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in lowering the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. They even work against the Delta variant. The CDC has found that this protection may wear off over time. Boosters keep the vaccines effective for longer.

Am I fully vaccinated without a booster?

You are fully vaccinated without a booster if it has been at least 2 weeks since you got your first J&J shot or your second Pfizer or Moderna shot, according to the CDC.

How do I get a booster?

Visit the VaxFinder tool at vaxfinder.mass.gov for a full list of locations. You can narrow results to search for locations that are offering boosters, with appointments available now for booking. Many locations are booking appointments out weeks in advance.

What if I don't know when I received my last COVID-19 vaccine shot? How can I find out which vaccine I received?

Consult your CDC vaccination record card for the date and type of your second COVID-19 vaccination. If you do not have your vaccination card, contact your primary care provider or the retail pharmacy where you were first vaccinated. If that is not possible, learn how to obtain your vaccination record, which could take up to 2 weeks, by visiting www.mass.gov/myvaxrecord.

Is the booster free?

Yes, the booster is free. You do not need to pay, have ID, or have health insurance to get a booster.

If I need a booster shot, does that mean that the vaccines aren't working?

No. COVID-19 vaccines are working well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant. However, public health experts are starting to see reduced protection, especially among certain populations, against mild and moderate disease.

Do I need to show my vaccine card or other proof of being fully vaccinated to get my booster?

If you have your vaccine card it is helpful so that your booster dose can be added to it, but you do not need to show your CDC vaccination card to get your booster. You will be asked to self-attest that you meet eligibility requirements such as age, health conditions, or occupation. There are no ID, or health insurance, requirements. Your vaccinator may choose to look up your vaccine records to confirm the type of vaccine you received before.

I got vaccinated at a MassVax site, where do I go to get my booster dose?

You can get a booster shot anywhere they are available including your primary care provider, a retail pharmacy or a community vaccination clinic. Or you can use [VaxFinder](https://vaxfinder.mass.gov) to find a location.

Is there a list of higher risk occupations and institutional settings?

Yes. The CDC has a list at mass.gov/CDCWorkLive.

When can I get a COVID-19 vaccine booster if I am NOT in one of the recommended groups?

Additional populations may be recommended to receive a booster shot as more data becomes available. Experts are looking at all available data to understand how well the vaccines are working for different populations.

Do I need to be a MA resident to get a booster? What if I lived somewhere else when I got my initial COVID-19 vaccine doses?

You can get a booster in Massachusetts if you live, work or study here.

Should people expect to get sick after the third dose?

Current data indicates that side effects following the additional dose are similar to those after the second dose. Common side effects are generally mild such as localized pain, redness or swelling at the injection site, and fatigue, headache, and low-grade fever. Serious adverse events are rare.

I got vaccinated at a MassVax site, where do I go to get my booster dose?

You can get a booster shot anywhere they are available including your primary care provider, a retail pharmacy or, a community vaccination clinic. Or you can use [VaxFinder](#) to find a location.

Can I just walk-in or do I need to book an appointment?

Walk-ins and appointments will be available at retail pharmacies, however, residents are encouraged to book an appointment via [VaxFinder](#) or directly with their provider.

Can I book an appointment by calling 2-1-1?

Yes. Individuals without access to the internet or who are unable to schedule their appointment online can call the COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Line toll free 2-1-1 or (877) 211-6277 for assistance with setting up an appointment.

Can I get my booster vaccine at home?

Yes. If you have trouble getting to a vaccine clinic, you can use the In-Home Vaccination Program. Visit <http://mass.gov/vaccinesathome> for more information.

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Can I get a flu vaccination at the same time as my COVID-19 booster?

Yes. You can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccinations like a flu or shingles vaccine at the same time or close together, [according to the CDC](#).