The best protection against COVID-19 is to be up to date with your vaccines. You are **up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines** if you have received the updated COVID-19 vaccine (also known as the bivalent vaccine).

### Staying up to date with the COVID-19 vaccination will protect you and others against the virus

COVID-19 is the disease caused by a highly infectious virus called SARS-CoV-2. Sometimes cases of COVID-19 can be mild, but others can be more severe and even deadly. This is especially true for older adults or people with chronic health conditions. One in 100 older Americans have died from COVID-19 disease. 75% of all COVID-19 deaths in the United States have been among adults 65 years or older.

You are up to date with the COVID-19 vaccine if you have if you have received the updated COVID-19 vaccine recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Staying up to date with the COVID-19 vaccine has many benefits:

- It will lower your risk of getting sick if you are exposed to the coronavirus.
  - Even if you are up to date with the vaccine, it is still possible to get COVID-19. However, data from real-world use of COVID-19 vaccines shows that vaccination substantially lowers the risk of becoming seriously ill if you do get infected.
- It helps protect the people you are around, especially people with a higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19. This includes older people and people with chronic, underlying conditions.

People who are immunocompromised or take medicine that affects the immune system are at higher risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19. It is especially important for immunocompromised people to stay up to date on their vaccines.

### FDA Approvals (as of May 2023)

Two COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, have developed updated COVID-19 vaccines. The updated COVID-19 vaccines protect us against two different strains of COVID-19. The FDA has provided an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for both updated vaccines.

The FDA has also provided an EUA for the Novavax monovalent vaccine.

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## CDC Recommendations for Staying Up-to-Date with COVID-19 Vaccines

### COVID-19 Updated Bivalent Vaccine Recommendations for Older Adults (65+)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are age 65+ or immunocompromised*, and have never previously received a COVID-19 vaccine</td>
<td>The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you receive the Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna updated vaccine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are age 65+ and not immunocompromised, and have already received the updated Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna vaccine</td>
<td>You and your clinician may decide a second Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna updated vaccine shot is needed. CDC recommends that you wait 4 months from your last shot to receive this second shot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are an adult of any age who is immunocompromised, and have already received the updated Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna vaccine</td>
<td>You and your clinician may decide a second Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna updated vaccine shot is needed. CDC recommends that you wait 2 months from your last shot to receive this second shot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are age 65+ and already received the original** COVID-19 primary series or an original vaccine booster, but not an updated vaccine</td>
<td>CDC recommends that you wait 4 months from your last shot to receive a single shot of the updated Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna vaccine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A person is immunocompromised when their immune system is weak. These people may have more trouble fighting COVID-19 and are at higher risk of getting seriously sick or dying from COVID-19. You may have a weak immune system if you have cancer, diabetes, or heart condition, for example. These are just a few of the diseases that can make your immune system weak. Please check with your healthcare provider to see if you have a medical problem that makes your immune system weak.

**Previous COVID-19 vaccines are called “original” because they were designed to protect against the original virus that causes COVID-19.

### Older adults who are unable or choose NOT to get an updated Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 bivalent vaccine can consider Novavax to get up to date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Dose</th>
<th>2nd Dose</th>
<th>3rd Dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 shot</td>
<td>2nd shot, 3 weeks after first shot</td>
<td>1 shot updated Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna booster is available in limited situations when you are unable or unwilling to receive a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna updated COVID-19 booster.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Vaccine Safety**

Safety has been key in developing and approving COVID-19 vaccines. There were many steps taken to make sure the COVID-19 vaccines were safe before they were made available to the public.

- **First**, clinical trials were carefully designed and controlled to find out how safe and effective the vaccines are. Tens of thousands of people participated in the clinical trials.

- **After** the clinical trials proved the vaccines were safe and effective, then the FDA and independent expert advisory boards reviewed the data to make sure they were correct.

- **Then**, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) at the CDC reviewed all safety data before recommending any COVID-19 vaccine for use.

- **Finally**, the FDA and CDC monitor the safety of vaccines post-authorization and recommendation via several system including the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, Vaccine Safety Datalink, V-safe program and others.

The CDC and other partners assess the effectiveness and safety of the COVID-19 vaccines under real-world conditions after FDA approval.

**Talk to your Primary Care Clinician or Vaccine Provider**

The FDA fact sheets for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna bivalent vaccines have more information about the benefits and risks of each vaccine. (You can also get more information on the Novavax vaccine). We recommend that you discuss the risks and benefits of getting vaccinated with your primary care clinician or vaccine provider before getting the shots.

Tell your vaccination provider about all your medical conditions, including if you:

- Have any allergies
- Have a fever
- Have a bleeding disorder or take blood-thinning drugs
- Are immunocompromised or take medicine that affects your immune system
- Have received another COVID-19 vaccine

They will discuss any other factors you need to know before receiving a COVID-19 vaccine based on your unique circumstances.
FDA-approved vaccines are currently available at no cost to you:

- If you have Medicare, you will not have to pay to get vaccinated.
- Medicaid and private health insurance plans cover all vaccine costs.
- If you are uninsured you can get free vaccines.

Vaccines are available at many locations:

- Most drug stores
- Community health centers
- State or local health departments

Find a COVID-19 vaccine location near you:

- Ask your doctor or healthcare provider
- Call 1-800-232-0233
- Text your zip code to 438829 or visit vaccines.gov