



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Who Needs A COVID-19 Vaccine Booster?

Sterling, Colo. – August 19, 2021: Currently, CDC is recommending that moderately to severely immunocompromised people receive an additional dose of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna. This announcement applies to a very small group of people who are immunocompromised patients, such as organ transplant recipients, people with certain cancers and others that are on immune-suppressing medications. Data has shown that these patients have had weak responses to the initial doses of the vaccine and are especially vulnerable to serious, prolonged illness from COVID-19.

While the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States continue to be remarkably effective in reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant, it was announced yesterday that a booster will be available for all people in America this fall. Subject to FDA approval of the safety and effectiveness of a third dose of the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines, booster shots will begin the week of September 20 and should be spaced eight months after an individual's initial second dose. Those individuals who were fully vaccinated earliest in the vaccination rollout; including many health care providers, nursing staff and residents of long-term care facilities and other seniors, will likely be the first eligible for a booster.

However, for the next four weeks the additional third shot is only recommended for people who meet the criteria outlined by the CDC. This includes people who have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

Before making an appointment to get a booster, talk to your primary healthcare provider about your medical condition and whether getting an additional dose is appropriate. For some of these patients, it may be necessary to pause immune-suppressing medications temporarily or alter care in order for the booster to be effective, so having your physicians' participation will increase the chances the additional dose of vaccine will be safe and effective.

Northeast Colorado Health Department (NCHD) will provide the booster, if the primary care provider doesn't have access to vaccine. Both the provider and patient need to be aware NCHD only carries the Moderna mRNA vaccine. It is recommended that the booster dose be the same vaccine as the primary series. If you received Moderna for your first two doses, you should have Moderna for your booster; the same applies to Pfizer. For those individuals that received the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine, there are currently no recommendations or guidelines for a booster dose. The CDC may likely have further recommendations in the future.

To make an appointment at one of our Moderna mRNA clinics visit

<https://www.nchd.org/covidvaxlink>. To find a list of other providers and vaccine options visit

<https://www.nchd.org/covid-19-vaccine-providers>.

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