

# BIVALENT COVID-19 BOOSTER DOSE FAQS FOR LONG-TERM CARE SETTINGS

*Updated 1/17/23 to reflect CDC's bivalent booster recommendations*

## ELIGIBILITY

### 1. Who is eligible to receive a COVID-19 updated (bivalent) booster?

- Everyone 6 months of age and older is recommended to receive a bivalent booster. The ONLY exception is children 6 months - 4 years of age who have received three doses of Pfizer-BioNTech primary series (no booster doses currently recommended).

### 2. Which updated (bivalent) booster vaccines are available?

- Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent booster is available to anyone 5 years of age and older.
  - i. Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent vaccine is also available as a third dose for children 6 months to 4 years of age who have received two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech primary series.
- Moderna bivalent booster is available for ages 6 months and older who completed their primary series.
  - i. To be eligible, children 6 months - 5 years must have completed their primary series with Moderna.

### 3. When should they get a bivalent booster?

- At least 2 months following completion of their primary COVID-19 vaccine series or last monovalent booster dose.
- Children 6 months to 4 years who received 2 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech primary series should receive the Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent vaccine as a 3<sup>rd</sup> dose 8 weeks after the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.

### 4. What if someone recently had a COVID-19 infection?

- At a minimum, defer any COVID-19 vaccination, including bivalent booster vaccination, until recovery from the acute illness (if symptoms were present) and

criteria to discontinue isolation have been met. For more information, refer to the [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines](#).

- In addition, people who recently had SARS-CoV-2 infection **may** consider delaying any COVID-19 vaccination, including bivalent booster vaccination, by 3 months from symptom onset or positive test (if infection was asymptomatic).

**5. Can the original monovalent booster still be used as a booster?**

- Monovalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are no longer authorized as booster doses.

**6. Can COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines be administered at the same time?**

- Yes, routine administration of all age-appropriate doses of vaccines simultaneously is recommended for people for whom no specific contraindications exist at the time of the healthcare visit.

**7. Who might benefit most from getting a bivalent booster now?**

- People who are [immunocompromised](#).
- People with [medical conditions](#) that increase their risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 (e.g., people with heart, lung, or kidney disease; diabetes; or dementia).
- People who live with someone who is immunocompromised, at higher risk for severe disease, or can't be vaccinated due to age or other reasons.
- People who are at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 (e.g., live or work in a LTCF or in a community where the COVID-19 level is high).

## BENEFITS AND RISKS

**8. What are the benefits of a bivalent booster?**

- The FDA granted authorization to Pfizer and Moderna to develop the bivalent booster as an update to their already-approved vaccines that met FDA's rigorous standard of safety and efficacy. Vaccines and booster doses are very effective at preventing severe illness and can help lower hospitalizations and deaths during the fall and winter seasons when the spread of respiratory viruses may be at its peak.

- Rates of cases, severe illness and hospitalizations increased as a result of Omicron variants. As Omicron variants keep emerging, the updated booster dose is an important tool to improve protection against currently circulating variants as well as prior strains.
- The previous boosters contained one strain while the updated boosters include an Omicron strain that has been causing the most recent cases.
- Many vaccines require a booster dose to ensure continued protection against severe disease. Protection from infection can decrease over time and booster doses are a safe way to restore protection and reduce severe outcomes of COVID-19.
- Staying current on COVID-19 vaccines, including primary series and booster doses, protects against the worst outcomes of COVID-19 for many months following vaccination.

#### **9. What are the risks of a bivalent booster?**

- The most common side effects of COVID-19 vaccines include redness and swelling at the injection site, fatigue, and fever.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### **10. Is a bivalent booster required?**

- For covered workers who are already in compliance with receiving the primary series and at least one booster, there is not a new requirement to receive the additional bivalent booster.
- For covered workers who have not yet met the COVID-19 vaccination requirement including a booster, please refer to the [Health Care Worker Vaccine Requirement FAQ](#).

#### **11. How should LTCFs utilize bivalent booster doses?**

- LTCF residents and staff who completed a primary series and received their last dose of COVID-19 vaccine at least two months ago are now eligible for a bivalent booster.
- LTCFs **should offer** bivalent booster to eligible residents and staff now.

- LTCFs should inform eligible residents and staff about current recommendations and how to access a bivalent booster ([MyTurn](#), [Vaccines.gov](#)).
- For additional details on COVID-19 vaccine access, refer to the [LTCF COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit](#).

## RESOURCES

- [CDC Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [CDPH COVID-19 Vaccine Resources](#)