

COVID-19

Vaccine Booster FAQ

AUGUST 18, 2021



Who is eligible for a third vaccine?

Currently, third vaccines are available for moderately and severely immunocompromised people including those in active treatment for cancer, transplant recipients (solid organ and stem cell/bone marrow transplants), advanced or untreated HIV infection, and those taking medications that suppress their immune system.

We expect booster doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines to be authorized for additional people soon.

What's the difference in a booster shot and a third vaccine?

Third vaccines are recommended for patients who have a medical condition or take medication that suppresses their immune system. This may prevent them from developing full protection from the first two doses of vaccine.

Booster doses are additional doses which are given to people whose immune response has responded but over time that response has fallen to a level that it needs 'a boost'. Booster doses are expected to be recommended soon for administration at least eight months after the first two-dose series of mRNA vaccines.

Who can get a third vaccine at UAMS?

Currently, UAMS is offering third vaccines only to qualifying patients who have a qualifying condition/qualifying medication under the care of a UAMS provider. At this time, third doses must be ordered by a UAMS provider.

Third doses are available for moderately and severely immunocompromised people including those in active treatment for cancer, solid organ and stem cell transplant recipients, advanced or untreated HIV infection, and those taking medications that suppress their immune system.

If I got my first two vaccines at UAMS, can I get a third vaccine at UAMS?

Patients who received their first two vaccines at UAMS must meet the medical criteria and be under the care of a UAMS provider to receive the third dose at UAMS. When approval is granted for booster vaccines, UAMS will administer them to eligible employees, students, patients and community members; we are developing guidelines and a process for boosters at the current time.

When will booster shots be available?

We anticipate that booster shots will be available within the next several weeks, and we are working to make vaccines readily available to employees, students and our community. It is likely we will be offering boosters and influenza vaccination at the same visit because both are important interventions to protect your health.

What do I do if I qualify for a third vaccine?

If you think you have a qualifying medical condition or are immunocompromised because of a medicine you take, talk to your doctor to make sure you should get a third vaccine. If your provider is at UAMS, after your vaccine has been ordered by your UAMS provider, you will be contacted by the ordering clinic or the UAMS appointment center to schedule their appointment. If you have questions, call the UAMS clinic where you receive care for your qualifying condition. Certain patients may also get a MyChart message letting them know they qualify for a third vaccine with instructions for scheduling an appointment.

Where can I get a third vaccine?

Vaccines will be administered at various UAMS sites including the Cancer Institute, Transplant Clinic, Family Medical Center, Internal Medicine Clinic, the Thomas and Lyons Longevity Clinic, the Rahling Road, Capitol Mall, Maumelle and Financial Centre Parkway Neighborhood Clinics, the Women's Center and Regional Program sites. Additional vaccine locations may be added once booster doses are approved.

If I had COVID do I need to wait for a third dose?

If you have had COVID, you may receive a third dose any time after you are released from quarantine. Many authorities recommend waiting at least 2-4 weeks.

How long after my first two COVID vaccines do I need to wait for a third dose?

If you qualify for a third dose, you should wait at least a month after your primary series before getting a third dose. Once booster doses are approved, you should wait at least eight months after your second vaccine to get a booster [this guidance is still in development].

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If I had a monoclonal antibody treatment do I need to wait for a third dose?

You should wait at least 90 days after receiving monoclonal antibodies for a COVID infection before getting a COVID vaccine. This is true for any dose, not just a third vaccine dose.

If I got a Johnson & Johnson vaccine, can I get another dose of COVID vaccine now?

No, not at this time. The guidance issued last week addressed only the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA COVID vaccines. We expect to know more about strategies to provide additional protection for those who received a J&J vaccine in the coming weeks.

What side effects should I expect after a third vaccine?

So far, reactions reported after the third mRNA dose were similar to those which often occur after the two-dose series: fatigue and pain at injection site were the most commonly reported side effects, and most symptoms were mild to moderate.

Does Student and Employee Health offer booster vaccines?

UAMS Student and Employee Health Services (SEHS) is not currently giving third doses of the vaccine. Employees who qualify for a third dose due to a medical condition or medication should contact their provider for more information. Once booster doses are authorized, SEHS will offer vaccines for employees.

If I got Moderna for my first two doses, can I get a Pfizer vaccine now?

We recommend using the same type of vaccine for your third dose if at all possible.

It's been eight months since my second vaccine. Can I get a booster dose now?

UAMS will not offer booster doses until they are authorized by the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and prevention.

How do we know additional vaccines are safe?

The vaccines used for the third and booster doses are the same vaccines used in the ongoing COVID-19 vaccine campaign. A number of small studies have been done with more than two doses of these mRNA vaccines and have not demonstrated any issues of concern associated with the additional doses.

Will I be quarantined if I have a fever or other side effects after my vaccine?

If you have no potential unprotected exposure to a COVID patient and your only symptoms are fever and other local symptoms within 1-2 days of the vaccine, you should not need to quarantine.

How long will it take to get maximum protection from the third vaccine or booster dose?

It will take at least two weeks after the third dose for maximal protection to develop. With the amount of COVID disease in our communities, we strongly recommend you continue to wear a mask, wash your hands frequently and avoid crowds and spaces with poor indoor air quality.