



NVFP
NORTHERN VIRGINIA
FAMILY PRACTICE

COVID Vaccine Update 8.24.21

Who is eligible for a third COVID shot?

The CDC recently recommended a third dose of either Moderna or Pfizer vaccine for moderately to severely immunosuppressed patients. This group represents 3% of the American adult population, including those who:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant & 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 oral or IV corticosteroids or other drugs like Humira, Enbrel, and Remicade that may suppress immune response



Where can I get a third dose of the vaccine if I'm immunocompromised? Local pharmacies, including CVS and Walgreens, are offering the vaccine with same-day appointments or on a walk-in basis. Go to www.vaccines.gov and click on the "Find COVID-19 Vaccines" button to find a location near you. Patients will need to bring their vaccination card and attest to their eligibility.

If I'm eligible for the third dose, which vaccine should I get? The current recommendation is to get a third dose of the vaccine series you received initially.

What if I received the Johnson and Johnson vaccine? Currently, there is no formal recommendation for additional shots; we will let you know if that should change.

What is the difference between this third dose and a booster shot? A booster shot is given when the initial, sufficient immune response to a primary vaccine series wanes over time. The COVID booster vaccines are also being fine-tuned to protect against new variants that are circulating. Immunocompromised patients, who were not sufficiently protected by the initial two doses, are being offered a third shot to stimulate their immune system and create more antibodies. The third shot is identical to the others and is considered part of the initial COVID vaccine series for this high-risk group.

Are booster shots necessary for others? While the level of protection remains high for those who have been fully vaccinated, it is expected that booster shots will be authorized for individuals last vaccinated more than 8 months ago. This will likely be offered first to the elderly and healthcare workers, and extended to the general population afterwards. Official recommendations will follow and we will keep you up to date.