



Chester County Health Department COVID-19 Third Dose Frequently Asked Questions

Created: August 13, 2021
Updated: September 17, 2021

Recent News

- On 9/17, the FDA Advisory Group recommended booster doses specifically for the following groups:
 - Individuals 65 and older
 - Individuals at increased risk for severe COVID-19
 - Healthcare workers and others at high risk for occupational exposure
 - **Boosters for these groups will NOT be available until the recommendations have been approved by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).**
 - **ACIP is meeting 9/22 and 9/23 to discuss final recommendations and approval for the Pfizer and BioNTech vaccine.**

All information below applies to the approved guidance related to 3rd doses for immunocompromised individuals

What does this guidance mean?

- On 8/13, the FDA and the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) approved an update to the Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines.
 - People with weakened immune systems who already got two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines can get a 3rd dose. These people had weak responses to the original doses of the vaccine.

Eligibility

- Who is eligible for a 3rd dose?
 - Currently (9/17), people with medical conditions or people receiving care for moderate to severely weakened immune systems:
 - Active or recent treatment for solid tumor and hematologic malignancies
 - Receipt of solid-organ or recent hematopoietic stem cell transplants
 - Severe primary immunodeficiency
 - Advanced or untreated HIV infection
 - Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids, alkylating agents, antimetabolites, tumor-necrosis (TNF) blockers, and other biologic agents that are immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory
 - Chronic medical conditions such as asplenia and chronic renal disease may be associated with varying degrees of immune deficit
- I received a Johnson & Johnson vaccine, am I eligible?



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- This update does not include the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The FDA and CDC are actively working on updating guidance for this vaccine product.
- When will the general public be eligible for 3rd doses?
 - At this time, the FDA/ACIP/CDC are reviewing if and when an additional dose may be needed for the general public (those who are at lower risk for severe illness) in the future. We will update the public of any changes – please check our website and social media.

Vaccine Product

- Do I have to get the same product for my 3rd dose?
 - For the 3rd dose, people should get the same product (Pfizer or Moderna) as their first and second doses. If that's not an option, people may receive an alternate product.
- What's the difference between a 3rd dose and a booster?
 - The term "3rd dose" is used to describe an extra dose that provides increased protection for those who may have never reached full immunity.
 - Some vaccines can wear off over time and at that point, a "booster" dose is needed to bring protection levels back up.
 - At this time, "booster" doses are not recommended.
 - The "3rd dose" helps people with weakened immune systems build protection similar to what most people got with their original vaccination.
- Does this mean my vaccine isn't effective?
 - This update is not based on how well vaccines work. It is based on research showing people with weakened immune systems may not have reached full protection to prevent the more serious complications of COVID-19 compared to the general public.

Scheduling an Appointment

- My doctor isn't offering the vaccine, what should I do?
 - Individuals who meet the eligibility criteria are able to schedule appointments using our COVID-19 vaccination calendar available here:
<https://www.chesco.org/4822/COVID19Vaccine>
- What should I bring with me to my appointment?
 - Please bring your original vaccination records. Records will be checked at time of appointment.
- Are walk-in appointments available at the Health Department?
 - No, all individuals must make an appointment using our calendar.
- I received my original doses from a provider other than the Health Department. Can I make an appointment with the Health Department?
 - Yes, please make an appointment using our calendar:
<https://www.chesco.org/4822/COVID19Vaccine>



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Side Effects

- What kind of side effects might I have from a third dose?
 - The most commonly reported side effects, which typically lasted several days, were pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, and fever.