



Metro Community  
Health Center

## **COVID-19 Vaccines: Third Dose for People Who Are Immunocompromised**

It is recommended that some people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised (meaning they have a weakened immune system) receive three doses of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, rather than the standard two-dose regimen. Additional vaccine doses are not recommended for any other group at this time.

### **Who is eligible for a third dose?**

People who are 12 years of age or older, have a condition or are taking medications or treatments that moderately or severely weakens their immune system, and received either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine are eligible for a third dose.

Conditions and treatments may include:

- Active treatment for cancer
- Received an organ transplant and are taking immunosuppressive therapy
- Received a stem cell transplant within the past two years
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency
- Advanced or untreated HIV
- Active treatment with a high dose of corticosteroids or other drugs that moderately or severely weaken your immune system

This is not a complete list. The recommendation for a third dose is for people who have conditions like those listed above and not for most people with other medical conditions such as diabetes or heart or lung disease. If you have an immunocompromising condition or are taking drugs that weaken your immune system, discuss with your doctor whether you should get a third dose.

### **Why is a third dose recommended?**

The recommendation is based on studies that show some people with immunocompromising conditions do not respond to two doses of the vaccine when compared to people without such conditions. A third dose may improve the immune response for some people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised.

### **How do I know if I need a third dose?**

You should discuss getting a third dose with your doctor. Your doctor will consider your medical conditions, treatment being received, risk of infection and other factors. At this time, antibody tests are not recommended for determining whether you have immunity (protection) against COVID-19.

### **Is it safe to get a third dose?**

Yes. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and independent experts have determined that the benefits of getting a third dose outweigh any known or potential risks.

**What about people who received the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine?**

At this time, an additional dose for people who are immunocompromised and received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine is not authorized by the FDA. We expect additional information to be available soon. Please speak with your doctor if you have questions.

**When should I get my third dose?**

You should get your third dose at least four weeks after your second dose. You can get a third dose no matter how much time has passed since your second dose.

**Does the third dose need to be of the same vaccine brand as the first two doses?**

Your third dose should be of the same vaccine brand as your first two doses, if possible. If you cannot get the same vaccine brand (Pfizer or Moderna), you can get the other brand (Pfizer or Moderna).

**Where can I get a third dose?**

You can get a third dose (or 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> too) at Metro Community Health Center.

**Is a third dose free?**

Yes, a third dose is free for eligible people. If you have insurance, it may be billed, but you will not be charged a copayment or other fee.

**What documentation do I need to get a third dose?**

You will be required to attest that you have a qualifying medical condition. No other documentation will be required.

**Can people who are immunocompromised stop other precautions after receiving a third dose?**

No. People who are immunocompromised are at increased risk for serious COVID-19 illness and the vaccine may work better for some immunocompromised people than others. For this reason, regardless of your vaccination status, you should continue all precautions, including avoiding crowds (especially indoors), wearing a mask and practicing physical distancing whenever you are outside your home. Also, it is extra important for people who are living with, or regularly in contact with, someone who is immunocompromised to get vaccinated and follow other public health precautions.

**What should people who are immunocompromised do if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or are exposed to someone with COVID-19?**

Regardless of vaccination status, people who are immunocompromised who have COVID-19 symptoms or are exposed to someone with COVID-19 should get tested and contact their health care provider right away to discuss monoclonal antibody treatment and prevention options. Monoclonal antibodies are more effective the sooner they are given. However, this treatment is not a substitute for vaccination.

**Metro Community Health Center may change recommendations as the situation evolves.**