

# COVID-19 Vaccine Booster



## What is a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose?

A booster is another dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. You can get the booster dose six months after the first two doses. Public Health officials recommend second boosters for people 50 years and older and those who are immunocompromised. You can find more information here at <https://www.nshealth.ca/coronavirusvaccine>

## Why do I need a booster dose?

After the initial vaccine, your immunity decreases over time, so you can still get COVID-19. The booster makes your immune system stronger against COVID-19 for longer. You will protect yourself and the people around you by getting a booster.

## Are booster doses from the same vaccine as the first two doses?

Yes. COVID-19 booster shots are the same formulation as the current COVID-19 vaccines. However, the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine booster shot is half the dose of the vaccine people received for their initial series

## Am I "fully vaccinated" if I don't get a booster dose?

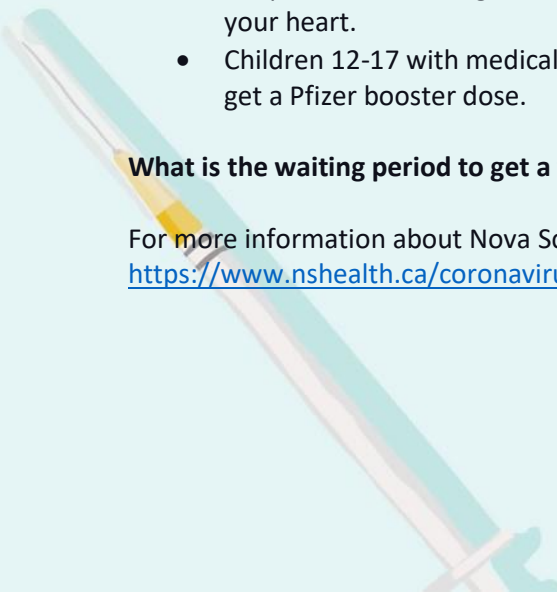
Yes. For Pfizer and Moderna, you are fully vaccinated two weeks after your second dose. For Janssen, you are fully vaccinated two weeks after the vaccine.

## Which booster should I get?

- People 30 years and older can get a full dose of Pfizer or a half dose of Moderna. It does not matter which vaccine you got first.
- Seniors living in Long Term Care need a full dose of Pfizer or a full dose of Moderna.
- People 18-29 should get Pfizer vaccine as a booster. There is less risk of a rare side effect for your heart.
- Children 12-17 with medical problems which increase their risk for severe disease should also get a Pfizer booster dose.

## What is the waiting period to get a vaccine for those who have tested positive for COVID-19?

For more information about Nova Scotia's vaccine strategy, please visit: <https://www.nshealth.ca/coronavirusvaccine>



### **Can a pregnant woman get the booster? Is it safe for the infant?**

Yes, it is safe for a pregnant individual to receive a vaccine, including booster doses. Pregnant women risk developing a more serious illness if they get infected with COVID-19, and the vaccines help prevent this. COVID-19 vaccines are not harmful to the fetus/infant. In addition, antibodies from the mom are passed to the developing fetus, so their baby has some protection when they are born. The mom can also pass antibodies through her breast milk which can also help protect her baby. A vaccinated mom is less likely to pass the disease on to her baby. A pregnant woman can receive a first booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine 120 days after the second dose (or after 1 dose of Janssen)

### **Will I need a booster every year?**

It's still unclear how long the vaccines will provide protection and whether a booster is required every year like the flu vaccine. For older adults, these questions are very important because our immune systems weaken as we age. Experts are studying the long-term immune response to the vaccine.

### **Can I get COVID-19 if I have had it before?**

Yes, you can get COVID-19 if you have had it before, especially with Omicron. The vaccine gives you more protection, even if you already had COVID. The vaccine can help prevent severe illness and death even if you get infected again.

### **Most restrictions are now lifted. Does that mean that COVID-19 doesn't exist, or is it not dangerous anymore?**

No, COVID-19 still exists. It is still dangerous for older people and people with chronic conditions, particularly if they are not vaccinated. It is also still important to follow health guidelines like wearing a mask indoors, washing your hands often, covering your mouth when you cough, and getting vaccinated.

### **When can I get my primary boosters?**

There are different intervals between vaccine doses and boosters, depending on age, health status, and eligibility criteria:

- Between the second dose and first booster:
  - 168 days (24 weeks) for people age 12 – 69
  - 120 days (17 weeks) for people age 70+
- Between the first and second boosters:
  - 168 days (24 weeks) – Ages 50 – 69
  - 120 days (17 weeks) – Pregnant people who received a booster before becoming pregnant.
  - 120 days (17 weeks) – People 50 - 69 years old who are moderate to severely immunocompromised, and eligible groups\* (see below)

Please note: Public Health recommends getting the second booster in the fall for better protection during the upcoming cold and flu season. As well, new vaccines that may offer broader protection against the Omicron variant may become available. For more information, please see [here](#).

## How can I get a booster?

### Before you start:

- You need a valid Nova Scotia health card to book an appointment online.
- You need a telephone number in case you have to be contacted.
- Provide an email when you book your appointment. You will receive a confirmation email of your appointment, a reminder email the day before your appointment, and an email with your vaccination record after your appointment.

### How to Book an Appointment:

You can book an appointment:

- Online for a clinic: <https://novascotia.flow.canimmunize.ca/en/covid-flu-booking>
- Call 1-833-797-7772 (Monday to Friday, 7am to 7pm and Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 6pm). You need to call from a Canadian phone number and be in Canada when you call. If a client needs interpretation, this is the best way to book an appointment (see "Available Interpretation Services" below)

For more information, check out ISANS's [How to Book a Vaccine Appointment - Project Beacon](#) website.

### How to Find a Drop-in Clinic

Vaccines are also provided at various drop-in clinics. These locations and times change week to week.

You can find the most up-to-date list of community clinics here:

<https://novascotia.flow.canimmunize.ca/en/covid-flu-booking>

Pharmacies also offer drop-in clinics: <https://pans.ns.ca/walk-covid-19-vaccine-clinics>

### Available Interpretation Services

If you need service in a language other than English, you can ask for an interpreter when you're your appointment by phone 1-833-797-7772 (over 125 different languages are available). A specialist will go through all the health and screening questions with the clients and answer whatever concerns and hesitations clients have about vaccination.

Pharmacies also provide brochures in different languages that clients can read when they get their shot. There may also be staff onsite who can interpret.

### Coronavirus (COVID-19)

#### COVID-19 Vaccine

#### Recommended intervals between vaccine doses

#### Vaccine safety and possible side effects

#### COVID-19 vaccine: Canadian Immunization Guide

#### Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC