

## What should I know about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines if I'm immunocompromised?



Catching COVID-19 can be more **dangerous** for you than other people.



You may not get **enough protection** from a 2-dose COVID-19 vaccine series.



A **third shot** could increase your defense against COVID-19.

## Extra Dose Recommendations

An extra dose is recommended for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised. This includes people who have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are 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 corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response



AmeriCares is a health-focused relief and development organization that responds to people affected by poverty or disaster with life-changing health programs, medicine, medical supplies and emergency aid.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Answers for



## People With Weakened Immune Systems



If I am immunocompromised, should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Immunocompromised people should get a COVID-19 vaccine. Catching COVID-19 might be more dangerous for you than others.

Will a COVID-19 vaccine work with my immune system?

Some immunocompromised people have a good immune response to the vaccines. But you might not get as strong of a response to the vaccine as other people. In some cases, you might need to get an extra dose of a vaccine to improve your body's defenses.

Is an extra dose the same as a booster shot?

No. A **booster shot** is given when a person's protection goes away over time. People who are immunocompromised sometimes don't get that protection in the first place. They need an **extra dose** in the beginning to get their defenses started.

**YES!**



## How do I know if I need an extra dose of a COVID-19 vaccine?

You need to check two boxes to get a third dose.

**You've taken one or two shots already.**

You are 6 months old or older and have gotten **2 shots of Moderna**

You are 5 years old or older and have gotten **2 shots of Pfizer**, or

You are 18 years old or older and have gotten **1 shot of J&J**.

**You have a weak immune system.**

**Talk to your doctor about your condition.** Ask whether you need to get an extra dose. *See back for third dose eligibility.*



## What are the benefits of an extra dose?

An extra dose may keep you from getting very sick from COVID-19. It also lowers your chances of dying from the disease. Some data shows that immunocompromised people gain protection from an extra dose of the same vaccine. You want to have as much protection as possible.



## What are the risks of an extra dose?

Experts continue to be on the lookout for vaccine side effects. The same goes for these extra doses. So far, side effects from the third mRNA dose have been the same as the two-dose series: mostly a sore arm and tiredness. These side effects are mostly mild. They go away in a few days.

However, as with the two-dose series, serious side effects are rare, but may occur.

If you need an extra dose of Pfizer's or Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine, you should get it at least 28 days after your second dose. Try to get a third dose of the same vaccine. If you don't know which vaccine you took or if it's unavailable, either mRNA COVID-19 vaccine can be used.

## Catching COVID-19 can be dangerous for immunocompromised people

People who are moderately to severely immunocompromised make up about 3% of the adult population. If you fall within this group, then catching COVID-19 could be very bad for you and those around you.

Moderately to severely immunocompromised people are at higher risk for:

- ⚠️ Getting sick from COVID-19 for a long time
- ⚠️ Being in the hospital for COVID-19
- ⚠️ Transmitting COVID-19 to the people around them
- ⚠️ Having a breakthrough infection



**Getting fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (maybe with an extra dose) can lower all these risks.**



**Plan to get your COVID-19 vaccine at**  
**[www.vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)**

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