



Do I really need to get a third dose?



Research from around the world now very clearly shows how important it is for adults to get three doses of a COVID vaccine.



Three doses are better than two doses at:

- ✓ Protecting you from getting COVID
- ✓ Stopping you from spreading COVID
- ✓ Protecting you from getting so sick from COVID that you have to go to hospital

Two doses of a COVID vaccine do not work as well as 3 doses against Omicron, the new COVID variant.

The protection from 2 doses of a COVID vaccine starts to decrease at around 3 months. Many vaccines, including some childhood immunizations, require 3 or more doses.

In Ontario, anyone over the age of 18 can get their 3rd COVID vaccine 3 months (84 days) after their 2nd dose.

Does it matter whether I get Moderna or Pfizer?

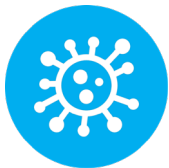
Moderna and Pfizer COVID vaccines are both safe and effective 3rd-dose vaccines.

They are both mRNA vaccines, with nearly identical ingredients that work in the same way. The main difference is that Moderna's vaccine delivers a higher dose of mRNA than Pfizer.

Mixing and matching Moderna and Pfizer is not a problem. If your 1st or 2nd vaccine was Pfizer, your third vaccine can be Moderna. If you had Moderna for your 1st or 2nd COVID shot, Pfizer is fine for your 3rd vaccine. Three doses of the same vaccine also works. Any combination of these vaccines is safe and effective.

If you are an adult under 30, you will receive the Pfizer vaccine. This is a precaution against developing a rare side effect called myocarditis which occurs most often in young men. The risk is very low with both vaccines but since fewer cases have been reported with the Pfizer vaccine, Ontario is giving only Pfizer to young adults.

For more information about receiving Moderna and Pfizer for your 3rd dose, see: <https://t.co/llcBh595uR>



Do I still need a third dose if I already had COVID?

It is important to get your 3rd shot even after getting COVID.

Research has shown that anyone who has had COVID and receives a vaccine has stronger and longer-lasting protection than someone who had COVID but did not get vaccinated.

It is safe to be vaccinated as soon as your symptoms have gone away which will give you immediate protection. To get even stronger and longer-lasting protection, experts now recommend getting your 3rd dose 3 months after you got COVID (and ideally 6 months after your 2nd dose).



What if I'm pregnant?

Getting a 3rd dose is especially important if you are pregnant. Being infected with COVID when you are pregnant can cause serious problems for parent and baby. A 3rd dose can prevent those complications and reduce the risk of your newborn getting COVID.

Who needs a fourth dose?

People with a very weak immune system need more vaccine doses to get the same amount of protection as other people. These people are now eligible for a 4th COVID vaccine 3 months (84 days) after their 3rd dose. This includes people who:

- ✓ Receive dialysis
- ✓ Are currently receiving chemotherapy
- ✓ Previously had organ or stem-cell transplants
- ✓ Have a rare genetic disorder like DiGeorge Syndrome that impairs their immune system
- ✓ Have advanced or untreated HIV
- ✓ Take medications that severely weaken the immune system. Examples include antimetabolites like methotrexate, biologic drugs that often end in 'mab', 'mib', or 'nib' and high-dose steroids (Prednisone 20mg daily or higher)

If you are eligible for a 4th dose, bring your prescription, prescription bottle or a referral from a healthcare professional to your vaccine appointment.

At this time, people with healthy immune systems do not need a 4th dose.

When will teens be able to get the booster dose?

As of February 18, anyone 12 and over is eligible to get their 3rd dose in Ontario. Youth age 12 to 17 should wait about six months — or 168 days — between their second and third doses.

For the most up-to-date information on who is eligible for a 3rd or 4th dose in Ontario and how to book appointments, visit: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/getting-covid-19-vaccine#booster-doses>