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COVID-19: Vaccine boosters

If you completed your primary COVID-19 vaccination course at least 3 months ago, and you're aged 18 or over, you are eligible for a booster.

Last updated: 4 February 2022

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Pfizer booster interval shortened to 3 months

Those aged 18 and over can receive a Pfizer booster 3 months (93 days) after completing their primary course to provide better protection against Omicron.

Reducing the interval to 3 months means an additional 1 million New Zealanders are eligible to receive their booster before the end of summer.

Why get a booster?

While two doses are likely to provide a good degree of protection against severe disease from Delta and Omicron COVID-19 variants for some time, a booster dose is likely to offer greater protection.

Current evidence shows your protection against infection after the primary vaccination course decreases over time. **Giving a 'top up' vaccine after a primary course helps boost your immunity against COVID-19.**

Anyone aged 18 or older, who has had two doses of COVID-19 vaccine at least 3 months ago, is urged to get their free booster vaccine to help protect themselves, their whānau, and the wider community

Boosters lower your chances of getting very sick from COVID-19 and ending up in hospital.



Transcript ▼

Under 18s

There's lots of interest about if, and when, 12 to 17-year-olds might be able to receive a booster dose. Advice from the Covid Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CVTAG) is expected in mid-February and we're looking at how this could be implemented if the scientific advice supports booster doses in some, or all, of this age group.

Advice on this will be provided later in February.

How to get a booster

If you completed your primary COVID-19 vaccination course at least 3 months ago, and you're aged 18 or over, you are eligible for a Pfizer booster. For most people a primary course is two doses.

You can check when your last vaccination was by logging into My Covid Record (<https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/http://mycovidrecord.health.nz/>), or checking your purple COVID-19 Vaccine Record Card if you have one.

The Pfizer vaccine is the preferred vaccine being used in New Zealand for booster doses, even if you had a different COVID-19 vaccine for earlier doses.

You can get a booster dose the same way you got your previous COVID-19 vaccinations – including walk-in sites and drive-throughs. Check Healthpoint (<https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19-vaccination/>), for available walk-in sites.

If it's been less than 3 months since your second dose you can still book ahead to ensure you get the date and time you prefer.

You can book an appointment for a booster dose through [Book My Vaccine](https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/https://bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/https://bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz/>), or by calling the COVID Vaccination Healthline on [0800 28 29 26](https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/tel:0800%2028%2029%2026) ([https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/tel:0800 28 29 26](https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/tel:0800%2028%2029%2026)) (8am to 8pm, 7 days a week). We'll make the booking for you and answer any questions. Interpretation services are available if you need them.

[The Pfizer booster – everything you need to know \(PDF, 668 KB\)](https://web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/about-the-pfizer-booster-040222.pdf)
([/web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/about-the-pfizer-booster-040222.pdf](https://web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/about-the-pfizer-booster-040222.pdf)).

AstraZeneca boosters

AstraZeneca boosters are available on prescription 4 months after you finished your primary course. You can get a prescription at the vaccinating AstraZeneca clinic or prior to your appointment with your preferred GP. Visits to GPs for a prescription for an AstraZeneca booster are free.

Overseas vaccinations

If you were vaccinated overseas, you can get a Pfizer booster 3 months after you completed your primary course. The Pfizer vaccine is the recommended booster dose regardless of what vaccine was used for earlier doses.

Severely immunocompromised people

People eligible for a third primary dose can currently access a booster dose 3 months after receiving their third primary dose.

[Information for severely immunocompromised people](https://web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/node/14590/) ([/web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/node/14590/](https://web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/node/14590/)).

My Vaccine Pass and International Travel Vaccination Certificates

You don't need to have a booster dose to be 'fully vaccinated' to get a My Vaccine Pass or an International Travel Vaccination Certificate.

However, if you do get a booster dose, it will be added to My Covid Record, and you can create another pass or International Travel Vaccination Certificate if you want to.

[My Covid Record](https://web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/my-covid-record-proof-vaccination-status) ([/web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/my-covid-record-proof-vaccination-status](https://web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/my-covid-record-proof-vaccination-status)).

Side effects of boosters

You may experience some side effects, similar to those you might've had after the first or second dose, such as muscle aches, pain at the injection site or headaches.

For most people these are mild effects. They are a sign your body's immune system is learning to fight the virus. They don't last long and for many people do not impact on day-to-day activities.

[Rare side effects of the Pfizer vaccine \(https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-side-effects-and-reactions\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-side-effects-and-reactions)

Text invites to submit side effects

If you have a booster, you may be invited by text to let us know about any side effects experienced – this is called a 'Post Vaccine Symptom Check'.

The text invite will come from the Ministry of Health and you'll be asked to reply 'YES', 'NO', or 'STOP'. All replies are free of charge.

If you want to take part you'll be sent a link to an online web form.

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Other Ministry of Health websites

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Consultations (<https://web.archive.org/web/20220214063422/https://consult.health.govt.nz/>)

Where to go for help

Emergencies

Dial 111 (tel:111) (for ambulance, fire or police)

Healthline

Dial 0800 611 116 (tel:0800611116)

Poisons

Dial 0800 POISON (tel:0800764766) (0800 764 766 (tel:0800764766))

Mental health crisis

Emergency contact numbers ([/web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/mental-health-services/crisis-assessment-teams](https://web/20220214063422/https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/mental-health-services/crisis-assessment-teams))

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