

## Bivalent COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Dose:

### What is a bivalent booster dose?

A bivalent vaccine is a vaccine that is designed to protect against two different strains of a virus. The new bivalent versions of the COVID-19 vaccine will offer protection against both the original strain of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) as well as the Omicron strain of SARS-CoV-2, which is now the predominate variant of the virus around the world. The vaccine manufacturing companies, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, have developed bivalent COVID-19 vaccines that are now available for use as booster doses in the United States.

### Who is eligible for a bivalent booster dose?

Everyone 12 years and older is now eligible to receive a bivalent booster as long as they've completed a primary series of the vaccine. The Pfizer Bio-N-Tech product is available for everyone 12 years and older. The Moderna product is available for adult 18 years and older. Individuals can receive either age-appropriate vaccine as long as it's been at least two months after their last COVID-19 vaccine.

### Why should I receive a bivalent booster dose?

If eligible, individuals should stay up-to-date on their COVID-19 vaccinations by getting boosted with the bivalent COVID-19 vaccine booster this fall. With many people returning to indoor activities after summer, including school and holiday gatherings, it is a good idea to protect oneself by receiving their bivalent booster dose.

### Which bivalent vaccine should I receive?

Currently, both Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna offer bivalent COVID-19 vaccine booster dose options for adults in the United States. An individual does not need to receive the same bivalent booster as their primary series. Individuals are encouraged to speak with their health care provider to discuss specifically which vaccine may be the best option for them.

## **Do I need to receive a bivalent booster dose?**

All individuals eligible for bivalent booster doses are recommended by the CDC to receive a bivalent vaccine rather than the original COVID-19 vaccines developed back in 2020. This is because the newly developed bivalent vaccines offer better protection against the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, which is now widely circulating around the world. The original COVID-19 vaccines, including Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax, still remain available to those who have not yet received their primary series of COVID-19 vaccine.

## **When should I receive my bivalent booster dose?**

Deciding when to receive your bivalent booster dose can be a tough choice. Individuals should take their own risk including age and underlying health conditions into account when deciding when to receive their bivalent booster. If you are thinking about delaying your bivalent booster dose vaccination, it is advised that you speak with a trusted health care provider in order to ensure you are making the best decision regarding your health.

## **Do I need a bivalent booster if I previously had COVID-19 infection?**

Yes. However, North Dakotans are encouraged to have a conversation with a trusted health care provider if they have further questions regarding when to receive a bivalent booster dose after a previous infection. Depending on your age, health status, when you had your prior infection and which COVID-19 variant you likely had, your health care provider may determine it is best to delay a second booster dose.

## **Are bivalent boosters safe?**

Bivalent booster doses likely have similar side effects to the original mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. The only change made to the vaccine was the addition of the Omicron BA.4/5 in the vaccine. Experts have determined the known and potential benefits of a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine booster dose with either of these vaccines outweigh their known and potential risks.

## Are bivalent boosters effective?

Updated COVID-19 boosters are expected to both help restore protection that has waned since previous vaccination and provide broader protection against newer variants. They target the most recent Omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, that are more transmissible and more likely to be able to evade antibodies made against earlier subvariants.

## Will more booster doses be needed in the future?

Updated COVID-19 vaccines provide protection against the currently circulating variants, and data suggest they also increase our immune response to help protect us against future variants. Early data also shows that individuals with a previous COVID-19 infection and a COVID-19 vaccination have the highest antibody response, or the best protection possible. While we don't know how long this protection from the updated boosters will last, experts are hopeful this will lead to longer protection from the COVID-19 vaccine with less frequent boosting in the future. As more data are collected, CDC will be better able to answer this question and provide further guidance.

## Where can I receive a bivalent booster dose?

Information on COVID-19 vaccine providers and clinics near you can be found at [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov). You can also contact the Public Health Hotline at 1.866.207.2880 for assistance.

### For more information...

[COVID-19 Vaccine Information | NDHHS Public Health Division](#)

[Stay Up to Date with Your COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccines | FDA](#)