



## Booster Doses – Frequently Asked Questions

NACI has recommended Canadians get booster doses for the COVID-19 vaccine — and it's normal to have questions. *The doctors at SHN's VaxFacts Clinic are here to help give you answers.*

### What is a booster dose?

A booster dose is an additional dose of a vaccine against COVID-19, beyond the “primary series”. The primary series of Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca vaccines is 2 doses. The primary series of Johnson & Johnson is 1 dose. Individuals are eligible to receive this vaccine if they are 18+ years old and completed the “primary series” at least three months ago. We recommend obtaining your booster dose as soon as you are eligible.

### What if I'm vaccinated and recently recovered for COVID-19?

We recommend obtaining a booster dose within 1 to 2 months of your recovery from COVID-19. This is because you will have some immunity to COVID-19 after recovery, which will wane over time. Spacing out your booster dose by 1 to 3 months after COVID-19 infection will allow for better overall protection against COVID-19 by further boosting this immunity.

### Why is it important to get a booster dose?

The immunity that you develop after receiving your “primary series” of vaccinations against COVID-19 will wane over time. The booster dose acts as a reminder to our immune system, and increases the immunity that we have to COVID-19, so that our bodies are better prepared to fight the infection if we are exposed to the virus.

### What is the difference between the Pfizer booster dose and Moderna booster dose?

The Pfizer booster dose is 30µg, which is the same dose as the Pfizer vaccine in the primary series. The Moderna booster dose for adults is 50µg, which is half the dose of the Moderna vaccine in the primary series (100µg). If you are 70+ years old or immunocompromised, your Moderna booster dose will be 100µg, which is the same dose as the primary series.

### **Is it safe to mix and match Pfizer and Moderna vaccines?**

Yes, it is completely safe to have Pfizer as your booster if your primary series was Moderna, and vice versa. Both Pfizer and Moderna are mRNA vaccines. Their mechanism is the same. Their rates of effectiveness and their safety profile are almost identical. They are like Coke and Pepsi! The concept of mixing and matching similar vaccines with different brand names for booster shots has been used many times in the past (hepatitis, tetanus) and has been safe and effective. This is the same logic used here.

### **Why are some vaccine clinics only offering one brand of vaccine?**

Vaccine supply has been an ongoing issue throughout the pandemic, affecting both Pfizer and Moderna availability at different times. This may determine which vaccine you have access to when you seek out your booster. This is okay, as both Pfizer and Moderna are mRNA vaccines and are interchangeable for your booster. Both are safe and effective against COVID-19. Given the potential risks associated with COVID-19 infection and how contagious the virus is, we recommend you receive the booster vaccine that is most readily available to you.

### **If I'm admitted to the hospital, is it better to get my booster dose now or wait until I'm home?**

It is usually best to get your booster dose while still admitted to the hospital, so as not to delay further boosting your immunity against COVID-19. There are some specific conditions that may require you to wait to receive your booster dose. We recommend that you speak to your doctor before you are discharged. It is important to be maximally protected against COVID-19, as soon as possible.

### **How do I make a phone appointment with a doctor at the VaxFacts Clinic?**

If you have any questions, concerns, or want to get further clarification by speaking one-to-one with a medical doctor in a confidential and judgement-free space, please make an appointment at [www.shn.ca/VaxFacts](http://www.shn.ca/VaxFacts) or by calling 416-438-2911 ext. 5738.