

Key Messages: Eligibility for additional COVID-19 boosters

*Highlighted text indicates updates made on 11 May 2023

Eligibility from 1 May

- o The additional COVID-19 booster is available for:
 - o people aged 30 and over
 - o people at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 aged 16 to 29
 - o pregnant people aged 16 to 29 years
 - o young people aged 12 to 15 who have health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, with a prescription.
- o Boosters are especially recommended for:
 - o all people aged 65 years and over
 - o Māori and Pacific people aged 50 and over
 - o people living in aged or disability residential care facilities
 - o people aged 16 and over at risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19
 - o pregnant people with health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19
 - o people with disability with significant or complex health needs
 - o people with serious mental health conditions
 - o young people aged 12 to 15 who have health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, with written consent and prescription
- o talk to your usual doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider about whether this is recommended and how to get a prescription.

Additional messages

- To get an additional COVID-19 booster:
 - o you must have had at least your first two COVID-19 vaccinations
 - o it's recommended you wait at least 6 months since your last COVID-19 vaccine
 - o it's recommended you wait at least 6 months if you have had a COVID-19 infection
- The bivalent vaccine has replaced the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for boosters.
- The Pfizer COVID-19 booster causes the immune system to create antibodies against both the original variant of SARS-CoV-2 and Omicron subvariants.
- The vaccine used for the primary vaccination course is the Pfizer COVID-19 original vaccine. The Novavax vaccine isn't recommended for pregnant people, please consult with a health professional.
- We encourage everyone who is eligible, to get both their COVID-19 booster and flu vaccination to ensure that they are well protected ahead of Winter.

Background key messages for additional booster dose

- To get an additional COVID-19 booster you must have had at least your first two COVID-19 vaccinations.
- It's recommended that you wait at least six months if you have had a COVID-19 infection. People at higher risk of serious illness can consider an additional booster from three months after COVID-19 illness.
- After a COVID-19 infection your antibody levels will be high, giving you some protection. This gradually decreases over six months which is why an additional booster dose isn't recommended until six months after infection.
- If you want to have an additional booster earlier than the recommended gap after your last COVID-19 vaccine, you should discuss this with your healthcare provider. You might not need a prescription.
- If you are at higher risk of impact of Flu or COVID-19 illness, please consult with a health professional on the right time for you to get an additional booster dose, it may be earlier than 6 months.
- Staying up to date with the recommended COVID-19 vaccinations will continue to protect you from the risk of serious illness, hospitalisation or death from COVID-19.
- Novavax additional booster doses continue to be available for eligible people aged 18 or older, six months after their last vaccination or infection with COVID-19. Prescriptions are not required, however Novavax is not recommended for pregnant people.
- You can book your COVID-19 vaccine or booster at www.BookMyVaccine.nz or by calling the COVID Vaccination Healthline on 0800 28 29 26 (8am to 8pm, seven days a week).

Additional messages specifically for the health sector

- Healthcare, aged care and disability workers who are aged 16-29 are not eligible to receive an additional booster unless it is prescribed.
- Those who wish to have the original Pfizer vaccine (if over 16) or Novavax vaccine (if over 18) as their additional booster dose can choose to do so when presenting for their vaccination. Note that Novavax is not available at every vaccination centre.
- **When considering an additional booster for young people aged 12 to 15 who have health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, [consult the Starship guidelines](#).**
- **The dose interval is recommended at six months; however, an additional dose can be administered at a minimum of four months between booster doses; five months between primary and first booster; and from three months after COVID-19 infection.**
- The benefit of vaccination in the reduction of severe COVID-19 should be weighed against the small risk of vaccine associated myocarditis and pericarditis. The Pfizer booster is the preferred choice during pregnancy due to the lack of safety data for Novavax.