# Booster Dose Key Points

* Booster doses of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine are now recommended for certain people.
* We know COVID-19 vaccines prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant.
* Boosters will help ensure longer-lasting immunity and increase any waning protection.
* As of Sept. 27, one-quarter of eligible Washingtonians (about 1.5 million people) have not received a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine. We will continue to focus on getting these people vaccinated, which will have the biggest impact on slowing the pandemic.

# Recommendations

* DOH is following guidance and recommendations from the CDC and Western States, which say:
* At least six months after completing the primary Pfizer vaccine series, the following people **should** receive a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine:
  + People 65 and older
  + People 18 and older living in long-term care settings
  + People 50 – 64 with [underlying medical conditions](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html) or those at increased risk of social inequities
* At least six months after completing the primary Pfizer vaccine series, the following people **may** receive a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine:
  + People 18 – 49 with [underlying medical conditions](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html)
  + People 18 – 64 who are at higher risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission due to their [occupational or institutional setting](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html)
* The CDC made its decision following a [careful examination of the latest data](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2021-9-23/03-COVID-Oliver.pdf), and robust and deliberative discussion around booster shots.
* Additional populations may be recommended to receive a Pfizer booster shot as more data become available.
* At this time, there are not yet booster recommendations for people who received the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines. The CDC and FDA will evaluate data in the coming weeks and may make additional recommendations for other vaccine types.

# Booster vs. Third/Additional Dose

* A Pfizer booster dose is given to someone who completed the Pfizer vaccine series and developed a good response.
* A third/additional dose is given to someone who may not have built the same level of immunity with a two-dose vaccine series.
* The CDC recommends [certain people who are immunocompromised](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/immuno.html) receive a third dose of an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna). At this time, no additional doses are recommended for people who received the J&J vaccine.

# Importance of Vaccination

* Science shows COVID-19 vaccines continue to be highly effective in reducing the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death.
* As COVID-19 continues to evolve, booster doses will further protect vaccinated people who are at high-risk and those whose protection has decreased over time.
* Currently, everyone 12 and older is eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
* We’ve made incredible progress and are closing the gap, but millions of people are still unprotected, including 1.5 million people who are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.
* We are asking providers to please continue vaccinating as many people as they can with their primary series of COVID-19 vaccine in addition to offering boosters.
* We are asking everyone in Washington who hasn’t yet gotten vaccinated to please make an appointment today. You will protect yourself and those around you and greatly lower your chances of needing to go to the hospital.
* There is plenty of vaccine available for everyone across the state.
* Make an appointment today at VaccineLocator.doh.wa.gov, text your zip code to GETVAX (438829), or call the COVID-19 hotline at 833-VAX-HELP.

# Other Information

* Risk and Side Effects: For many who completed their primary Pfizer series, the benefits of getting a booster shot outweigh the known and potential risks. So far, reactions reported after the third Pfizer shot were similar to that of the two-shot primary series. Fatigue and pain at the injection site were the most commonly reported side effects.
* Fully Vaccinated: People are still considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine.
* Proof of Vaccination: At your first vaccination appointment, you should have received a vaccination card that tells you what COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where. Bring this card to your booster shot vaccination appointment so your provider can fill in the information about your booster shot.
* Like the first two doses, booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine are available at no cost.