

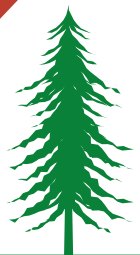


**DECEMBER 1ST, 2021**

**COVID Q&A**

**Question:** I heard COVID-19 booster shot recommendations recently changed. What do I need to know?

**Answer:** Booster shots are now recommended and available to everyone over the age of 18 due to the Omicron variant. Recommended timelines for getting the vaccine booster shot vary by the type of shot received. See the information below for specific information. The new recommendation also allows for mixing and matching of vaccine types, which means you can choose which vaccine type you'd like to receive.

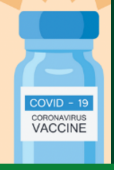


Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Booster shots are additional doses of a vaccine that strengthen your existing protection. Since vaccines sometimes provide less protection over time, booster shots make sure you continue to be protected.

Most of us have already received booster doses for other vaccines, such as tetanus and whooping cough, in order to keep our protection strong.

**Get your booster dose when you can!**



**A booster shot is recommended:**

- **6 months** after your last dose if you received the **Moderna or Pfizer** vaccine
- **2 months** after your initial dose if you received the **Johnson & Johnson** vaccine



The FDA has approved "mixing and matching," or getting a different vaccine for a booster than your first vaccine series. Some data suggests this might provide better protection.

**If you still have questions, contact a healthcare provider or tribal clinic!**



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- Scientists are studying a new COVID-19 variant of concern named Omicron. This new COVID-19 strain was first identified in southern Africa.

**Background Information on viruses/variants**

- Viruses often evolve in ways that help them flourish; they develop because a virus makes copies of itself and mutations occur. A virus with one or more mutations is then considered a variant of the original. The evidence suggests that Omicron has several mutations that could impact how easily it spreads.
- The Omicron variant is concerning to scientists, because the virus has had many mutations, possibly making it more contagious, and possibly making vaccines less effective.
- All variants of COVID-19, including the Delta variant that is dominant worldwide, can cause severe disease or death, in particular for the most vulnerable people, and that is why prevention is always key.

**Have You Heard of the New COVID-19 Variant?**

# THE OMICRON VARIANT

## *The Known VS. the Unknown*

Source: *The New York Times & The World Health Organization*

- The WHO (World Health Organization) says it's working with partners to understand the potential impact of Omicron variant on the effectiveness of vaccines and other COVID-19 precautions.
- Unfortunately, Omicron seems likely to be more contagious than Delta, including among vaccinated people.
- To be clear, there is genuine uncertainty about Omicron. Maybe it will prove to be worse than the very early signs suggest and cause more severe illness than Delta.
- There is currently no information to suggest that symptoms associated with Omicron are different from those from other variants.
- The WHO is reminding people that the best way to stop the spread of COVID-19 is to socially distance, staying at least 6 feet from others; wear a well-fitting mask; open windows to improve ventilation; avoid poorly ventilated or crowded spaces; keep hands clean; cough or sneeze into a bent elbow or tissue; and get vaccinated when it's your turn.
- Preliminary evidence suggests there may be an increased risk of reinfection with Omicron (ex: people who have previously had COVID-19 could become reinfected more easily with Omicron), as compared to other variants of concern, but information is limited.
- Dr. Rudo Mathivha, the head of the intensive care unit at a hospital in Soweto, South Africa, said that severe cases have been concentrated among people who were not fully vaccinated.
- Dr. Sharon Alroy-Preis, a top health official in Israel, emphasized yesterday that when vaccinated people were infected, they became only slightly ill.
- Katelyn Jetelina, an epidemiologist states, "Do not take Omicron lightly, but don't abandon hope either. Our immune systems are incredible."

## Today's Little Chuckle

Q: What goes up but does not come back down?

A: Your age!

