

# COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE FAQ

The Food and Drug Administration recently released [new guidance](#) on COVID-19 vaccines, authorizing that individuals 65 and older who have received a single dose of a bivalent vaccine may receive one additional dose at least four months following their initial bivalent dose. It also allows immunocompromised individuals who have received a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine the option to receive a single additional dose of a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine at least two months following a bivalent dose.

For our employees who might be affected by these new recommendations, the Houston Methodist COVID-19 Vaccine Scientific Committee has these recommendations:

**Q: I am older than 65, and it has been at least four months since I got a bivalent vaccine. Should I get another booster now that it is available to me?**

**A:** Yes. The booster offers a safe, extra layer of protection for those at high risk of serious illness from a COVID-19 infection.

**Q: I am younger than 65, but I am immunocompromised. Should I get another booster now if it has been at least two months since my last bivalent vaccine?**

**A:** Yes. It is because of the same reasons older people should consider getting another vaccine. For the immunocompromised, if two months have passed since their last one, they should consider getting one for extra protection.

**Q: I am not 65 yet and am not immunocompromised. Should I get another booster if it has been four months since the last one?**

**A:** Not at the present time. This might change if the virus develops new variants and/or the FDA approves new vaccines.

**Q: Will it be required by Houston Methodist?**

**A:** No. There are no plans at this time to require another bivalent booster.

**Q: If I am in one of these high-risk groups, should I get one every four months?**

**A:** The FDA has not approved administering a booster every four months. The agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have approved the booster be administered once per year for the general population and twice per year (thus far) for high-risk individuals. This guideline could change in the future, but we should stay within FDA guidelines for now.

**Q: Will the bivalent vaccine be administered with the flu shot this year?**

**A:** We do not know, but Moderna is working on a combined COVID-19, flu and RSV shot. More news about that is expected this summer.



## EMPLOYEE HEALTH QUESTIONS

**Q: Can I get the booster through Employee Health? What if I am not 65, can I still get one if it has been four months?**

**A:** Not everyone is eligible for the additional bivalent vaccine. Only unvaccinated new employees hired after April 18, 2023, those who previously had vaccine deferrals that expired on or after April 18, 2023, employees 65 and older, and those who are immunocompromised can get the bivalent from Employee Health. Here are some details.

- Employees who were previously unvaccinated against COVID-19 must now receive one dose of a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine. There is no booster requirement with the bivalent vaccine.
- Employees who had previously received one dose of a monovalent COVID-19 vaccine are now eligible to receive one dose of a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine at least two months after getting the monovalent. Your deadline to become compliant with this requirement will be the last day of the fourth month.
- Employees 65 and older who had previously received one dose of a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine are now eligible to receive one additional dose of the bivalent COVID-19 vaccine four months after their initial dose.
- Employees who are immunocompromised who had previously received one bivalent COVID-19 vaccine are now eligible to receive one additional dose of the bivalent COVID-19 vaccine at least two months after their initial dose. Any additional doses after those initial two doses will require a doctor's order.

**Q: What if I received only one dose of the monovalent COVID-19 vaccine? Do I need to finish my series and then get a bivalent booster?**

**A:** If you have only received one dose of the monovalent COVID-19 vaccine, you will only need to receive one dose of the bivalent vaccine to complete your series. You will become eligible to receive the bivalent vaccine two to four months after your first vaccine. You are required to receive the bivalent on the last day of the fourth month.

To schedule your COVID-19 vaccine, make an appointment online by logging into the Employee Health portal through your MARS application.