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THE COVID-19 BOOSTER

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

On August 13, 2021 the FDA authorized a third dose for immunocompromised individuals who have received either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. There is concern that over time, the efficacy of the vaccine begins to decrease, and the third “booster” shot will strengthen immunity.

Immunocompromised patients can receive the third shot 28 days after their second.

WHAT IF I RECEIVED THE JOHNSON & JOHNSON VACCINE?

At this time booster shots are only being recommended for those who received the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Recommendations for those who received the Johnson & Johnson Vaccine are expected soon.

WHAT DOES IMMUNOCOMPROMISED MEAN?

Those who are immunocompromised have weakened immune systems, making it harder for them to fight infections. One is considered immunocompromised if they have a health condition that weakens their immune system or if they take a medication that weakens it. Conditions like HIV/AIDS, asthma, cancer, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, organ transplantation, type 1 diabetes, leukemia, lymphoma, and common variable immune deficiency are some of the most common to weaken the immune system. Corticosteroids and prednisone are the most common medications to weaken the immune system.

HOW DO THEY KNOW I NEED A BOOSTER SHOT?

Several studies from major health systems including the Mayo Clinic, show the vaccine becomes less effective over time. We all know COVID-19 is still out there and raging in some communities. To continue the strong immunity you achieved with the initial two vaccines, it is suggested you receive the third as soon as possible.

IF I DON'T GET THE BOOSTER SHOT, DOES THAT MEAN I NO LONGER HAVE PROTECTION?

If you received the vaccine as directed, two shots of Moderna or Pfizer or one shot of Johnson & Johnson, you are still protected from getting seriously ill from COVID-19. The concern is that over the next few months, those who were vaccinated earlier this year will have less and less immunity as time goes on.

HOW DO I GET A BOOSTER SHOT?

If you are immunocompromised and received either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, you qualify now for a third dose of the vaccine. If you are able, return to the same site you received the first two vaccines. Be sure to take your vaccine card with you. Most sites will not require a doctor's note to confirm your immunodeficiency.

IF I AM NOT IMMUNOCOMPROMISED, WHEN CAN I GET THE BOOSTER SHOT?

Once the FDA approves, the preliminary plan is that beginning September 20, all individuals who received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines will be eligible eight months after their second. This date is subject to change as formal plans are being developed.

DO I NEED TO GET THE SAME VACCINE AS I DID FOR THE FIRST TWO?

It is recommended you receive the same vaccine for the booster shot as the first two. If you are unable to do so, you should check with your health care provider.

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