



News Release

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Omicron COVID-19 vaccine boosters now authorized for certain individuals

Bivalent boosters aim to provide better protection from currently-circulating variants of COVID-19

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and other healthcare providers will soon begin offering Omicron variant-targeted bivalent booster doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines following authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices, and the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup.

The bivalent vaccines combine the companies’ original COVID-19 vaccine compositions with BA.4 and BA.5 spike protein components, providing additional protection by targeting variants that are more transmissible and immune-evading. The primary COVID-19 vaccine series will stay the same, given their proven efficacy in preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. DOH’s [updated booster dose recommendations](#) are as follows:

- People ages 12 – 17 who have completed a primary vaccine series can receive the Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent booster at least two months after their most recent dose.
- People 18 and older who have completed a primary vaccine series can receive either company’s bivalent booster at least two months after their most recent dose.
- Those ages 5 – 11 who have completed Pfizer-BioNTech’s primary vaccine series should continue to receive the company’s original monovalent booster at least 5 months after their most recent dose.
- Children ages 6 months – 4 years are currently not authorized for any COVID-19 booster doses.
- People ages 12 and over who currently have appointments to receive COVID-19 booster doses will need to contact their providers to ensure the bivalent booster is available; if not, those appointments will need to be rescheduled, as the former monovalent booster doses are [no longer authorized for this age group](#).

“We’re excited this updated bivalent booster will help increase protection against the Omicron variants as we head into the fall season,” said Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD, MPH, Chief Science

Officer. “As SARS-CoV-2 changes, so must the tools we use against it - this update helps ensure that vaccines and boosters will continue to be the most effective ways to reduce the risk of hospitalization and death, and keep those most at-risk healthy and safe.”

An initial allocation of 191,100 bivalent booster doses is currently en route to providers throughout the state and will be available beginning the week of September 5 after the Labor Day holiday. Subsequent weekly allocations will follow, building the state’s inventory levels over time. DOH urges the public to remain patient, as we expect initial demand to exceed available inventory before resolving in the coming weeks, and to visit [Vaccine Locator](#) or call the COVID-19 Information Hotline at 1-800-525-0127 to find available resources near them.

The [DOH website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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