

Third Dose Of COVID-19 Vaccine In NJ: New Details Released

COVID vaccines now have a third booster shot.

Here's what you need to know about how it's being rolled out in New Jersey.

NEW JERSEY - With just about half of the U.S. population fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and around 68 percent of the New Jersey population inoculated, federal and state officials are finalizing plans to administer a third shot to some of the most vulnerable residents.

A third vaccine dose for immunocompromised individuals is now available in the Garden State, a shot "intended to ensure that [immunocompromised people] have enough protection against COVID because they may not build up the same level of immunity as other people," said New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli during a Monday afternoon news conference.

Earlier in August, President Joe Biden announced that booster shots will be available in the nation starting Sept. 20. The FDA and the CDC have already authorized a third dose of either Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for those who are moderately to severely immunocompromised. **Read more: [COVID-19 Booster Shot Authorized For Immunocompromised](#)**

Persichilli added that the state is currently working on establishing a network of sites to offer third "booster" shots first for immunocompromised New Jerseyans.

According to [the White House](#), the plan is for a booster shot to eventually become available to all adults eight months after their second shot. Since the first shot was authorized, 19,111 individuals have already received a third dose. The booster shot is free and does not require proof of ID or health insurance.

"Our vaccination sites were instructed to offer third doses to this population and they were also informed that proof of condition or a doctor's note is not required," Persichilli said. "The additional dose of either Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine should be the same vaccine as the initial series of vaccine as possible and should be administered at least four weeks after the second dose."

Persichilli's remarks come as the delta variant continues to sweep New Jersey, causing COVID-19 spikes and high transmission rates in all 21 counties to date. The booster shot is expected to provide additional protection, especially to the most vulnerable groups. Data has also shown that the effectiveness of vaccines may decline over time.

"Recent data makes clear that protection against mild and moderate disease has decreased over time," US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said. "This is likely due to both waning immunity and the strength of the widespread delta variant."

Those in active cancer treatment, those with uncontrolled HIV, organ or stem cell transplant recipients, those taking medications that weaken their immune system such as chemotherapy or anti-rejection medication after a transplant and disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs are currently eligible for a third dose.

A full list of conditions can be found on the [CDC website](#).

"The Department [of Health] will also be issuing guidance for pop-up clinics to schedule pop up events four weeks after the initial event so people can return to the same place with the same trusted partners for their second dose. The four week period can apply to both Pfizer and Moderna at this time," Persichilli said.

Healthcare providers, residents of long-term care facilities and older adults are not yet eligible, but are poised to become eligible for the third shot earlier than the rest of the population.

The CDC has said there isn't yet enough data to say whether a second shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine would give extra protection against the coronavirus. While that could change, a J&J second dose has not yet been authorized.

The state is currently determining point-of-distribution locations for the third dose in each county. Third dose mega-sites may also be in the cards, Persichilli added, noting that the state is prepared for a "range of scenarios."

Residents who know that they meet these clinical guidelines can contact a vaccine provider and make an appointment for the third dose.

Those who are unsure if they should receive a third dose can await word from their health care provider indicating eligibility for a third dose, or contact their health care provider to confirm their eligibility.