Frequently Asked Questions for COVID Booster Shots

1. What is a Booster shot for COVID -19?

A Booster shot is an additional dose of vaccine after someone has received their initial vaccine series (either 2 shots of Moderna or Pfizer or 1 of Johnson & Johnson).

2. Why do I need a Booster shot?

Recent data suggests that the level of immunity that people get after their initial vaccine series declines after about 6 months. This might mean that although you would still have some protection from getting sick if you were exposed to COVID-19, there might be an increased chance that you could get COVID-19 the further away you are from your initial vaccine. This might be particularly true if you have a reason to have a problem with your immune system, like if you are taking medicines or have a medical problem that affects your immune system.

3. Which shot should I get as my Booster?

The strong preference is that you receive the same vaccine as the booster as you did for your initial series (at this time, either Moderna or Pfizer). For those that received Johnson and Johnson as their first shot, there will be a recommendation in the very near future, according to news reports.

4. When should I get a Booster shot?

The current recommendation for availability to begin to roll out to the public is September 20. The initial recommendation was 8 months after your second shot. But, this recommendation appears to be changing to shorter intervals. The Biden administration plans to propose that the interval be 5-6 months after the initial vaccination series for the general public. Officially not everyone will be eligible at the beginning of this period. Stay tuned; we will update you in this space.

5. Will I get sick after the Booster shot?

There do not appear to be any new side effects related to the booster. Just as after the initial vaccines, there can be some low-grade fever, muscle aches, and headache that can last for a day or so. Any side effects may be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS vaers.hhs.gov).

6. Can I stop wearing a mask if I get a Booster?

No! Don't stop wearing your mask. Mask wearing is still important and needed to decrease the transmission of COVID-19.

7. What if I haven't been vaccinated for COVID yet?

The most important thing that we can all do to interrupt the spread of COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. FIGHT is offering vaccines to our patients. Call your provider, or go to: https://www.phila.gov/services/mental-physical-health/get-vaccinated/sign-up-to-get-a-covid-19-vaccine/ to find a location offering vaccines.