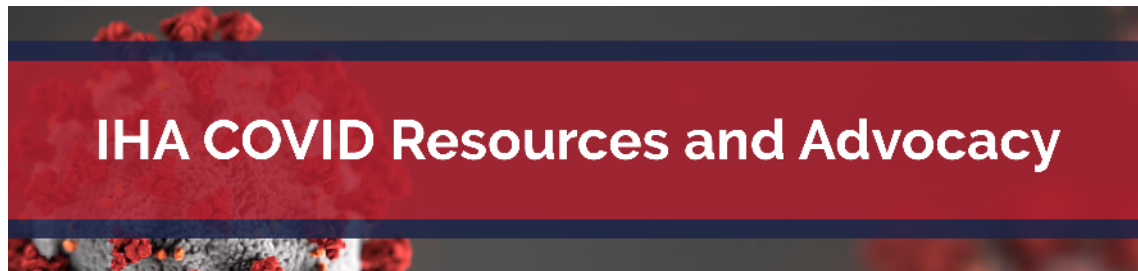


Click [here](#) if you are having trouble viewing this message.



*Wednesday, Aug. 18, 2021*

### **US to start booster shots Sept. 20**

The Biden administration is recommending booster doses for most Americans who received a coronavirus vaccine to combat waning immunity and the prevalence of the delta variant.

In a joint statement today, health officials said people would need boosters beginning eight months after their second dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. Available data shows protection against SARS-CoV-2 infection begins to decrease over time following the initial doses of vaccination. In association with the dominance of the delta variant, evidence is emerging of reduced protection against mild and moderate disease.

Administration of the boosters will begin Monday, Sept. 20. At that time, those who were fully vaccinated earliest – including many health care providers, nursing home residents and other seniors – will likely be eligible for a booster. Doses will be delivered directly to residents of long-term care facilities.

The move is subject to an independent evaluation by the FDA to determine the safety and effectiveness of a third dose of the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines and the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices issuing booster dose recommendations based on a thorough review of the evidence.

Booster shots likely will be needed for people who received the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, but evidence is still being examined with more data expected in the coming weeks. Administration of the J&J vaccine did not begin in the US until March, so boosters wouldn't be needed until November at the earliest.

The decision to provide boosters has significant implications domestically as well as abroad. Just more than 50% of Americans are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus. Although the pace of vaccinations has been increasing in recent weeks, millions are not vaccinated and have expressed no interest in getting vaccinated. The White House also has promised to be a world leader in donating the vaccine abroad, and officials said that is not changing.

### **People with Medicare who are immunocompromised will receive the additional COVID-19 dose at no cost**

CMS is assuring eligible immunocompromised individuals on Medicare they can receive the booster with no cost sharing. Medicare will pay for administering an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine consistent with the modified FDA emergency-use authorization. For COVID-19 vaccine administered on or after March 15, 2021, the national average payment rate for physicians, hospitals, pharmacies and many other immunizers is \$40 per dose. Medicare will continue to pay this amount for other doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Patients are advised to check with their providers for booster eligibility. Patients must receive the same brand of vaccine they received for their first two shots. There is no authorization yet for extra shots of the single-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

People are eligible for the third shot with these conditions:

- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress the immune response.
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection.
- Active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood.
- Treatment for moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome and Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome).
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last two years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system.
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system.

Patients will be asked to attest they have one of the qualifying conditions, however, they will not be required to provide proof.

CMS will share more information and guidance in the coming days about billing and coding for the additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for immunocompromised patients.

### **Educational opportunities**

- [A Path Forward: Thriving in Rural Health Care After COVID-19](#), 11 am-Noon, Thursday, Aug. 19. Tying community engagement to diversity and health equity, this webinar explores true stories of the amazing resiliency of rural communities amid the formidable challenges of a pandemic.
- [COVID-19 Provider Relief Fund: Reporting Requirements and Strategies](#), Noon-1 pm, Tuesday, Aug. 24. This presentation will provide a brief recap of the provider relief fund and a detailed review of the new reporting guidance. It also will discuss common reporting questions and strategies in preparation for the reporting deadline.



**Click here for the latest**  
**COVID-19**  
**Resources**



IOWA HOSPITAL  
ASSOCIATION  
*We care about Iowa's health*



100 E. Grand, Ste. 100  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309-1800