

ASK

THE

EXPERT

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FAMILY PHYSICIANS
SUPPORTING FLORIDA'S FAMILY PHYSICIANS

1 Is it beneficial or detrimental to "mix" Moderna and Pfizer vaccines?

A: There are insufficient data at this time to make much of a call. There is a study underway to assess each of the 3 platforms (Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J) boosted by each of the three (total of 9 comparison groups). Results will not be available for some time and they will only be based on serology and not clinical outcomes.

2 Should those who received J&J vaccines get one or two mRNA vaccine shots?

A: There is no current ACIP recommendation for an augmentation dose of either mRNA vaccine for persons who received J&J and are immunocompromised. In practical terms, one dose of mRNA vaccine after J&J would likely provide a significant boost.

3 Is there any data on side effect risk with booster shots? More risk than initial shot?

A: We will see this data emerge soon as Pfizer and Moderna are submitting their data to FDA. We do not expect to see any increases in risk or severity.

4 When can we expect a 'modified' booster that takes into account the latest variants?

A: Most of the current data show that a booster dose of mRNA vaccine offers wide protection for all currently circulating variants in the US. There are studies in the works with

modified mRNA vaccines (aimed at differences in the spike protein, but we do not expect any modified vaccines in the near future.

5 Is there a role in checking spike protein antibodies for immunocompromised patients prior to a booster?

A: No. CDC recommends against this approach.

6 Why are immunocompromised patients recommended to get a booster any time after 1 month from completing vaccination, but the general population is recommended to wait 8 months? Is there a better immune response if non-compromised patients wait the full 8 months rather than 6 months?

A: The main reason is that only about 40% of immunocompromised patients mount a significant response to 2 doses of mRNA vaccines. An additional "augmentation" dose provides protection to about 50% of the non-responders. At present, there is no recommendation for a booster dose and a lot of debate whether a booster dose is needed in immunocompetent individuals.

7 What is the current status of developing booster shots to target the new strains of circulating COVID?

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8 Any updates on the timeline for children until 12 to receive the vaccines?

A: Soon. The Pfizer vaccine may be available by the end of October...

9 Has there been any new data on the cardiac side effects in young men?

A: Perhaps the best resource on this is: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/pdfs/mm7035e5-H.pdf>

10 Is there hope for a combination flu/ COVID booster this year?

A: Manufacturers are exploring this possibility, but we will not see this for the 2021/2022 influenza season.

11 COVID Booster and Pediatric Vaccinations

A: CIP uses an explicit evidence-based approach to making its recommendation. They will be making recommendation today on Moderna and J&J vaccine boosters, including mix and match. They have already made an evidence-based recommendation for the use of Pfizer/BioNTech boosters. As soon as FDA approves Pfizer/BioNTech for pediatrics – age 5–11 years, ACIP will consider the evidence and issue a recommendation.