

Bivalent Booster

MYTHS AND FACTS



MYTH: The bivalent booster isn't needed because the pandemic is over. The CDC says we don't have to wear masks anymore.

FACT: Masking remains an essential tool for preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses, such as the flu. You may still be asked to wear a mask in a health care facility to protect vulnerable residents during periods of high transmission in the community. New strains of COVID-19 continue to emerge in the United States and worldwide. Many of them have the potential to cause significant outbreaks, as we have seen in the past. Getting vaccinated is the best way to stay safe from future outbreaks. Now that fewer people are wearing masks, it is even more critical to increase your immunity by being up-to-date with the latest booster.

MYTH: The bivalent booster isn't necessary. I've already gotten two boosters, and I haven't gotten sick.

FACT: The effectiveness of monovalent booster decreases over time (approximately three months). Plus, the monovalent provides immunity primarily against the original COVID-19 virus. The bivalent (updated) booster offers immunity against the original COVID-19 virus AND the current omicron variant. Therefore, the updated COVID-19 booster is a better vaccine.

MYTH: Once I get the bivalent booster, I will have to get another one every two months.

FACT: You only need the bivalent (updated) booster once this year. The bivalent booster has broader immunity compared to the earlier monovalent boosters, which allows it to be a once-a-year booster.

MYTH: The bivalent booster increases cardiac-related death.

FACT: Becoming infected with COVID-19 increases the risk of myocarditis by 11 times. The COVID vaccine cuts this risk in half. Like the monovalent vaccine, the bivalent booster can cause a very rare chance of myocarditis, primarily for younger men. It is self-limiting, and there are no long-term effects.

MYTH: I hear that this flu season is supposed to be tough, and I want to get my flu shot. The bivalent booster will have to wait.

FACT: Yes, we are expecting a tougher flu season. In addition, with fewer people wearing masks, the risk of flu and COVID-19 virus transmission has increased. It is advisable to get both the flu and the updated COVID-19 booster. You can safely receive both vaccines at the same time.

MYTH: COVID-19 no longer makes people very sick; it is like a cold, so I don't need the latest booster.

FACT: An increase in the number of people vaccinated against COVID-19 has significantly contributed to lowered hospitalization rates and deaths. The booster vaccine substantially reduces the risk of severe illness, hospitalization or death. However, unvaccinated people or people with certain medical conditions are still hospitalized and dying from COVID-19. In addition, many people are also developing Long COVID syndrome. The vaccine decreases all of these risks.

MYTH: I have already had COVID, so I have natural immunity. I don't need the booster.

FACT: With the new variants, the protection from natural immunity does not seem to hold up well. Further, the level and duration of natural immunity vary among people. Therefore, we cannot depend on natural immunity. The updated booster creates a predictable level of immunity against multiple strains of COVID-19, thus providing a better immunity level. As new variants develop, the updated booster offers more predictable coverage against COVID-19.

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