

COVID-19 FAQ: December 22, 2021

What is the Omicron COVID virus?

Omicron is a variant of the COVID-19 virus is the latest strain of the coronavirus to be designated as a variant of concern (VOC) by the World Health Organization and the CDC. This decision is based on multiple factors, including the detection of Omicron cases in multiple countries. It has an unusual combination of mutations that may enable it to spread faster than previously identified variants. No cases of this variant have been identified in the U.S. to date. The CDC is following the details of this new variant. New variants of the virus are expected to occur. Taking measures to reduce the spread of infection including getting vaccinated is the best way to slow the emergence of new variants.

The following chart provides for the COVID-19 vaccines that are currently approved and where Skokie residents can obtain the vaccines.

	Pfizer (12+ years)	Moderna (18+ Years)	J&J (18+ years)	Pfizer (5-11 years)
1st Dose	Yes-Approved	Yes-Approved	Yes-Approved	Yes-Approved
2nd Dose	Yes-Approved	Yes-Approved	Yes-Approved	Yes-Approved
Additional Dose (3rd Dose) for individuals with severely compromised immune systems. Click here for more information.	Yes-Approved (12+)	Yes-Approved (18+)	N/A	N/A
Booster Dose (3rd Dose) Click here to see if you qualify for a booster dose.	Yes (16+)	Yes (18+)	Yes (18+)	N/A
Vaccines offered by Skokie HHS?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
How do I schedule an appointment for a Skokie HHS clinic?	Visit www.skokie.org			
Where else can I get the vaccine?	Visit www.vaccines.gov or search for vaccines through Skokie Retail Pharmacies (Walgreens, CVS), Private Health Care Providers and Pediatricians, Cook County Health Department and for children through the child's school.			

What is the different between Dose #3 Additional Dose and Dose #3 Booster Dose?

	Vaccine Dose 3 – Additional Dose	Vaccine Dose 3 – Booster Dose
Which vaccines?	Available Now for Pfizer and Moderna	Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J)
Who qualifies?	Only for Immunocompromised Individuals	All Individuals (16) years and up.
What is the purpose of this extra dose?	Purpose is to bring immune system antibodies up to a sufficient level of protection	This dose “boosts” an individual’s immune system because the immune response may slow after a certain amount of time
How long after receiving 2 nd dose can I receive dose?	Able to receive 28 days after 2 nd dose	Able to receive six months or more after the second or third dose of Pfizer or Moderna or two months after the first dose of Johnson and Johnson.

Q: If I need a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose, does that mean that the vaccines aren’t working well?

The vaccines are working very well to prevent the worst cases of COVID-19 that lead to hospitalization or death, even against the highly contagious Delta variant. The virus is constantly changing and booster shots are recommended for some people to ensure the best protection.

Q: Why should I get a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: While the COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized in the U.S. continue to be effective in reducing the risk of severe disease, hospitalization and death, including protection against the Delta variant, many vaccines see reduced protection over time. While study and data analysis are ongoing, federal health officials have concluded that a booster shot will be needed to maximize vaccine-induced protection and prolong its durability.

Q: Does my booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine need to be from the same manufacturer as my first and second doses?

A: No. The vaccines can be used interchangeably. You should receive whichever vaccine is available on the day that you go to get a booster.

Q: Is there a minimum interval between administering routine vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines?

A: No. You may receive a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines without regard to timing. This includes receiving a COVID-19 vaccine and any other vaccines (including live, attenuated vaccines such as the measles-mumps-rubella [MMR] vaccine) on the same day and/or at the same time.

When deciding whether to co-administer other vaccines with a COVID-19 vaccine, consider:

- If you are behind or at risk of becoming behind on recommended vaccines;
- Your risk of vaccine-preventable disease such as COVID-19 and flu, due to exposures at work or during an outbreak;
- The side effects of the vaccines

Learn more about [co-administration with other vaccines](#).

Q: Can people who received a Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine get a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine?

A: Yes. The company's research suggests that a 2nd dose of the J&J vaccine, more than two months after your original dose, may increase the effectiveness of the vaccine against COVID. The FDA, CDC, and IDPH are all stating that receiving an mRNA vaccine after receiving a J&J vaccine will improve the effectiveness of the vaccine. The vaccines can be mixed for better coverage.

Q: Is the booster dose the same as the first and second doses that I received?

A: The Pfizer and the J&J doses are the same. The Moderna dose is half of the dose that is administered for doses one and two received before. All of these booster doses have proven to be safe and effective.

Q: Where can I get a third "Additional Dose" or a booster dose?

A: Vaccine is readily available. Currently, vaccine providers, including HHS, pharmacies, pop-up clinics and other healthcare providers can provide third additional doses and booster doses. Skokie HHS is offering third additional and booster doses according to the schedule below. Residents can also find a vaccine provider from the [Village website](#), www.vaccines.gov or by calling 1-800-232-0244 (TTY 888-720-7489).

Q: When are HHS COVID-19 vaccination clinics held?A: Visit www.skokie.org to find information on available Skokie HHS COVID-19 vaccination clinics.

- **All HHS COVID-19 vaccination clinics are held at 7770 Frontage Road, Skokie**, except for Johnson & Johnson vaccines (see below).
- Johnson & Johnson Vaccine: Must call HHS at 847-933-8252 to schedule an appointment.

There are numerous COVID-19 vaccine providers in the community, many with evening, weekend and walk-in hours. [See information on other COVID-19 vaccine providers in the community.](#)

Q: Will I be notified when it is time for my booster dose?

A: No. Residents that received their first and second doses from HHS or a different vaccine provider can receive their third and/or booster dose from the Village's HHS Department, however they will not receive any notice that they are eligible for a booster dose.

Q: Will I have to make an appointment to receive a booster dose?

A: Yes. All booster doses will be given by appointment only, according to the clinic schedule. Once a resident receives an email alerting them that they are eligible for a booster dose, they are welcome to make an appointment at any upcoming clinic at www.skokie.org

Q: Do I have to get the booster dose right away or at a later date?

A: According to the latest information from the FDA, booster doses for Pfizer are recommended for individuals 18 years and older that meet specific requirements a minimum of six months from the individual's second dose date for Pfizer and Moderna and two months after an individual's first dose date for Johnson and Johnson. It is a personal choice to wait longer than the six months.

Q: I am a Skokie resident but got my first and second doses from another provider. Can I get a booster dose from the Village?

A: Residents who did not receive their first and second doses from the Village are encouraged to contact their original provider for their third booster dose. If a Skokie resident's original provider cannot provide a booster dose, then that resident can register for a clinic provided by HHS.

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Q: Will I have to pay for the booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine?

A: All COVID-19 vaccine shots are free, including first, second, additional and booster doses.

Q: I prefer Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Does Skokie still administer that type of vaccine, and will I need a booster dose?

A: The Village will still administer Johnson & Johnson vaccine upon request. Contact 847/933-8252 to make an appointment for a Johnson & Johnson vaccine first dose or booster dose.

Q: Will Skokie provide booster doses to school staff at Skokie schools?

A: All Skokie schools are working with the Illinois Department of Public Health to host on-site booster dose vaccination clinics for staff. Schools that are not hosting their own clinics can work with the HHS to coordinate booster doses for eligible and qualifying school staff.

COVID-19 Testing Information

Skokie’s [COVID-19 website](#) provides a list of local COVID-19 test sites. Residents can receive free COVID-19 PCR testing through one of the [Illinois Department of Public Health Community Testing Sites](#) or receive testing through insurance or private pay at participating Skokie pharmacies, an individual’s healthcare provider or at various independent testing clinics.

Q: What is the best kind of COVID-19 test?

A: There are different types of COVID-19 tests – diagnostic tests (PCR and antigen) and antibody tests.

- Molecular (PCR) and antigen tests are types of diagnostic tests that can detect if you have an active COVID-19 infection and can inform you if need to take steps to quarantine or isolate yourself from others. Samples for diagnostic tests are typically collected with a nasal or throat swab, or saliva collected by spitting into a tube. **The Skokie Health and Human Services Department recommends residents get tested via the PCR test when available, since this is the “gold standard” and most reliable COVID test.**
 - [See list of local PCR testing locations.](#)
 - [See list of local antigen testing locations.](#)

- Antibody tests look for antibodies in your immune system produced in response to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Antibody tests should not be used to diagnose an active COVID-19 infection. Antibodies can take several days or weeks to develop after you have an infection and may stay in your blood for several weeks or more after recovery. Samples for antibody tests are typically blood from a finger stick, or blood drawn by your doctor or other medical personnel.
 - [See information about antibody testing locations.](#)

Q: Do I have to quarantine if I have symptoms and am waiting for test results?

A: Yes. If you are tested because you are symptomatic, you should isolate yourself at home until you receive your test results and follow the advice of your health care provider.

Q: When should I get a test?

A:

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, even after vaccination
- If you have had close contact (within six feet for a total of 15 minutes or more) with someone with confirmed COVID-19, even after vaccination
- If you took part in activities that put you at higher risk for COVID-19 because you could not socially distance as needed, such as travel, attending large social or mass gatherings, or being in crowded indoor settings
- If you have been asked or referred to get tested by your health care provider, or state health department