

**REVIEWED**

Coronavirus COVID-19

Add Topic +

# Another COVID booster is now approved for some—what to know and how to ease side effects

**[Felicity Warner](#), [Amanda Tarlton](#), [Kaleb A. Brown](#) and [Rachel Moskowitz Levin](#)** Reviewed

Published 1:37 p.m. ET April 20, 2023 | Updated 1:39 p.m. ET April 20, 2023

— Recommendations are independently chosen by Reviewed's editors. Purchases made through the links below may earn us and our publishing partners a commission.

On Tuesday, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized people 65 years and older, as well as immunocompromised individuals to get an additional COVID-19 booster shot.

While vaccines and booster shots remain effective at preventing serious illness even after some time has passed, their effectiveness at preventing minor illness does begin to wane over time.

While this isn't a big problem for young, healthy individuals, it poses risk for older people and those with compromised immune systems—a seemingly minor sickness can complicate and become serious. The FDA says it will make a recommendation for younger, healthy individuals early in the summer.

Here's what you need to navigate COVID-19, both before and after you've gotten your booster shot.

► **More:** Does COVID-19 during pregnancy lead to neurodevelopmental problems in babies?

## Is this COVID-19 booster new?

No, the booster that the FDA has recommended is the same bivalent booster that has been available for months. Both Pfizer and Moderna's boosters are considered bivalent because

they protect against the BA.4 and BA.5 variants of the coronavirus, as well as the original strain.

In June, the FDA will discuss what additional variants a fall vaccine should address, if any.

## What is the bivalent COVID booster for?

It's meant to offer more protection than what's possible with previous boosters alone. It will bolster protection against the virus' worst symptoms, potentially prevent new infections and reduce the number of deaths across the country. What's more, the booster reduces the risk of "long covid" symptoms such as brain fog and fatigue that can last for several months. Either booster may be chosen regardless of which shots you have received previously.

## Side effects of the bivalent COVID booster

Symptoms of the booster shot can include headache, fatigue, nausea, chills, fever or soreness at the spot of the injection. Don't let the fear of side effects keep you from protecting yourself and others with the booster shot. There are many remedies to help alleviate any discomfort you may feel. If side effects are worrisome or don't go away within a few days, it is recommended to contact a healthcare provider.

*Make smart choices without hours of googling. Subscribe to The Checklist newsletter for expert product advice and recommendations.*

### 1. A reusable ice pack

Icing the vaccination spot may provide immediate relief to any aches you're experiencing. This one from Amazon has over 24,000 rave reviews from people who like that the flexible design allows you to wrap and bend it to fit snugly against any body part (like your upper arm, in this case). They also say it stays ice cold for hours.

**\$16.99 from Amazon**

### 2. A washcloth for your arm and head

If you notice any discomfort on your arm where you were vaccinated, the CDC recommends laying a clean, cool washcloth on the area. With several glowing reviews, these Amazon Basics

washcloths are praised for being very soft and absorbent and surprisingly high quality for the price.

Placing a cool, damp washcloth on your forehead or the back of your neck can also relieve fever-like symptoms.

**\$23.74 from Amazon**

### **3. Epsom salts for soaking**

Epsom salt baths have long been a solution to muscle aches and soreness. So if you feel tender post-vaccine, you might benefit from a soak. These Epsom salts have over 24,000 reviews on Amazon with people saying they provide quick and effective relief and are more affordable than other brands.

**\$4.39 from Amazon**

### **4. A water bottle to stay hydrated**

One of the CDC's top tips for anyone getting vaccinated is to drink plenty of fluids. An easy way to make sure you're getting enough H<sub>2</sub>O? A reusable water bottle. Of all the ones we've tested at Reviewed, we found the Brita Stainless Steel Filtering Water Bottle to be the best. It keeps your water refreshingly cold and filters out any odors while you sip.

**\$29.90 from Amazon**

### **5. An ice roller to cool your skin**

You can use this ice roller the same way you would an ice pack (i.e., over the sore spot on your arm or on your forehead if you feel a headache coming on). Thousands of reviewers love that it's easy to use—simply chill it and then roll—and that it feels so soothing against your skin.

**\$16 from Amazon**

### **6. An eye mask for peaceful shuteye**

A gel eye mask like this one provides two things that are known to help with headaches: coolness and darkness. The gel can be iced down to mitigate pain or tension and the solid

design will block out any irritating light. Reviewers like that it maintains its cold temperature well and that it fits comfortably and snugly over your eyes. If a gel eye mask isn't your thing, our favorite sleep mask, the Mzoo Sleep Mask, should do the trick for some restful shuteye.

**\$8 from Amazon**

**\$22 from Amazon**

## **7. A resistance band to stretch your arm**

When your arm is sore, the last thing you may feel like doing is using it. But that's exactly what the CDC recommends, saying that exercising your arm and getting it moving can help relieve some of that pain. With these highly-rated resistance bands—which have over 11,000 reviews—you can do some light stretching and mobility to prevent your arm from getting stiff.

**\$13 from Amazon**

## **8. A thermometer to monitor your symptoms**

The CDC notes that running a slight fever after receiving the vaccine is totally normal (although if it persists for a few days, reach out to your healthcare provider). To monitor your temperature, use a digital thermometer like the one offered by Femometer. It's speedy, accurate and its results are color coded for convenience.

**\$19 from Amazon**

## **9. Hand sanitizer to take with you**

To prevent COVID-19 and other illnesses, you should make sure to always have a supply of hand sanitizer at the ready, especially if you're going into a pharmacy or doctor's office where there may be higher levels of germs present. Hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol can help keep you and those around you safe by killing harmful germs. These travel-sized Purell are easy to toss in your bag or pocket on your way out the door.

**\$14 from Amazon**

## 10. A face mask to keep you—and your loved ones—safe

While getting a vaccine and booster will lower your risk of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19, the best way to prevent its spread altogether is to use a mask. Wearing a mask is the way to go if you're looking for peace of mind, particularly if you're in an area of high transmission or are at higher risk for health issues. N95 or KN95 masks are both the gold standard when it comes to protection, filtering out much more particles than a cloth mask.

**\$6 from Amazon**

## 11. A quality pillow to sleep off the discomfort

The best way to combat any post-shot fatigue is to give into it and get some sleep. The key is to have sleep that's restful, meaning you'll want to make sure your bedding is as comfortable as possible. While it's a tall order to upgrade your bed on short notice, it's much easier to upgrade your pillow which can still transform your sleep quality. We recommend the original Coop Home Goods pillow after testing several pillows. We love that it's extremely comfortable and customizable.

**\$72 from Amazon**

## 12. Embrace the comfy clothes

Your body is building up protection against the coronavirus and it might leave you feeling lousy for a day or two. Lean into comfort by dressing in sweatpants, a cozy top and an easy-to-use pair of shoes. We love athleisure from Free People's FP Movement like this reversible long-sleeve set as it's comfy, but also incredibly stylish. It's ideal for staying comfortable at home while you're regaining strength or going about your usual daily routine.

**\$108 from Free People**

*The product experts at Reviewed have all your shopping needs covered. Follow Reviewed on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **Instagram**, **TikTok** or **Flipboard** for the latest deals, product reviews, and more.*

*Prices were accurate at the time this article was published but may change over time.*