

COVID-19 Vaccine Update: Information about 3rd doses

The President's public health and medical experts recently announced that a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccines will be needed to maximize vaccine-induced protection and prolong its durability. We appreciate that many of our patients are anxious to receive a third dose of the vaccine and we want to provide you with the latest information available to help you better understand the eligibility requirements and remain protected.

Who is eligible to receive the third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Currently, the FDA has only authorized an additional dose for people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems at least 28 days after they have received their second shot. This includes people who have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

IMPORTANT: We strongly encourage immunocompromised patients to consult with your physician prior to getting the third dose.

Where can I get the additional dose if I am immunocompromised?

After you have consulted with your doctor and it has been decided that a third dose is appropriate, these vaccinations are currently available at retail pharmacies across Westchester and the Westchester County Center is providing vaccinations Monday – Saturday from 8:00AM to 6:30PM and on Sunday from 8:00AM to 12:00PM. No appointments are necessary.

Should I get the same mRNA COVID-19 vaccine as before?

Yes. The CDC recommends that people who received either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine use the same vaccine for their third dose. However, if the same vaccine is not available, the other mRNA vaccine is acceptable. Please note: There is not enough data on whether or not those immunocompromised patients who received the J&J/Janssen vaccine should get an additional shot. More information is expected in the coming weeks.

Can I get the additional dose from White Plains Hospital, White Plains Hospital Physician Associates or Scarsdale Medical Group?

We are not administering third doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines at this time. In the interest of time, we recommend that you first consult with your physician and get vaccinated at one of the sites mentioned above to ensure your health and safety.

When will other groups be eligible to receive the third dose?

The FDA is actively discussing that now. They have stated they anticipate approval somewhere around mid-September and we will notify our patients when there is updated guidance.

We continue to see an increase in COVID-19 cases across Westchester as a result of the new Delta variant. If you have not yet gotten vaccinated, please do so. It is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones and it is the only way to end this pandemic. Thank you for trusting us with your care and we will update you as more information is available.