

PRESS RELEASE



Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Additional COVID-19 shot available for immunocompromised patients

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC), with guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Food and Drug Administration, will be offering a third dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine to people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

Patients who are moderately to severely immunocompromised can obtain an additional dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) by walking into the COVID-19 mass vaccination site (i.e., Multi-Purpose Center), or through the CHCC Immunization Clinic, and requesting the third dose.

Consent forms for a third dose for an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine must be completed by patients at the time of vaccination for the third dose. The consent forms will include a section in which the patient/vaccine recipient will self-attest to being moderately to severely immunocompromised and that they have already received two doses of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

Included in CDC's recommendations of people who may receive an additional dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine are recipients of organ or stem cell transplants who are taking immunosuppressive therapy; active recipients of treatment for solid tumor and hematologic malignancies; people with advanced or untreated HIV infection; people who have moderate or severe immunodeficiency; or active recipients of high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress their immune response.

A [full list of conditions](#) can be found on CDC's website. Individuals should talk to their healthcare provider about their medical condition, and whether getting an additional dose is appropriate for them.

[According to the CDC](#), emerging data suggests some people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems do not always build the same level of immunity compared to people who are not immunocompromised. In addition, [in small studies](#), fully vaccinated immunocompromised people have accounted for a large proportion of hospitalized breakthrough cases (40-44%). Immunocompromised people who are infected with SARS CoV-2 are also [more likely to transmit the virus](#) to household contacts.

When possible, the third dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should be the same vaccine as the initial series. However, if the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine product given for the first two doses is not available or

is unknown, [either mRNA COVID-19 vaccine product may be administered](#). The third dose must be administered at least 28 days after the completion of the initial mRNA COVID-19 vaccine series. At this time, there is no additional dose advised for patients who received a Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, and the CDC does not recommend additional doses or booster shots of a COVID-19 vaccine for any other population.

While vaccination is likely to increase protection, people who are immunocompromised should continue follow the 3 W's (wear a mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance) to protect themselves and those around them against COVID-19, even after vaccination.

For more information about CHCC programs, follow @cnmichcc on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; visit www.chcc.gov.mp; or call (670) 234-8950.

This press release may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html>.