

COVID booster shots likely needed within a year

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Fully vaccinated people will likely need a COVID-19 booster shot within

about a year, the nation's top infectious diseases expert and Pfizer's CEO said Wednesday.

"We know that the [vaccine](#) durability of the efficacy lasts at least six months, and likely considerably more, but I think we will almost certainly require a booster sometime within a year or so after getting the primary," Dr. Anthony Fauci told *CNN*.

Fauci also said Wednesday that variant-specific booster shots may not be needed.

"Instead of having to play whack-a-mole with each individual variant and develop a booster that's variant-specific, it is likely that you could just keep boosting against the wild type, and wind up getting a good enough response that you wouldn't have to worry about the variants," he said. The wild type is the original strain of the virus.

Meanwhile, trials of a Pfizer booster vaccine are ongoing, company CEO Albert Bourla said.

"I believe in one, two months we will have enough data to speak about it with much higher scientific certainty," he told *CNN*.

"If they got their second shot eight months ago, they may need a third one," Bourla said, adding that booster shots could be coming between September and October of this year.

He said Pfizer will have to see what the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approves, and what its recommendation will be on how best to protect the American people.

Moderna has also been working on a booster shot—a half dose of its vaccine—to fight COVID-19 variants like B.1.351, first seen in South

Africa, and P.1, first discovered in Brazil, *CNN* reported.

Medical experts believe coronavirus may end up being like the flu, which requires a new shot every year both because the circulating strains mutate quickly and because immunity wears off quickly.

Fully vaccinated welcomed to travel to EU countries

The fully vaccinated will soon be welcome to visit countries in the European Union, officials there announced Wednesday.

The new measures for tourists and other travelers could take effect as early as next week, *The New York Times* reported.

Visitors will be allowed into the bloc's 27 member states if they've been fully immunized with vaccines approved by the European Union's regulator or the World Health Organization. They include the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca and Sinopharm vaccines.

That would make Americans, who have been receiving shots from Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, eligible to travel to the EU.

Visitors from countries considered safe from a COVID-19 perspective will also be allowed to visit Europe, and a list of those countries will be finalized on Friday, the *Times* reported.

EU member states will still be able to require negative PCR tests or quarantines for certain visitors.

The EU will also have a legal "emergency brake" that will let it quickly return to more restrictive travel rules if a threatening new variant or other COVID-19 emergency emerges, the *Times* reported.

US to share another 20 million vaccine doses with countries in need

President Joe Biden announced this week that the United States will share another 20 million doses of coronavirus vaccines with countries that are in dire need of shots.

The move comes on the heels of his promise to share 60 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine with the world by July 4. This latest batch of 20 million doses will include Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines as well as AstraZeneca's vaccine, which has yet to be approved by federal regulators before being shipped overseas, *CNN* reported.

"We need to help fight the disease around the world to keep us safe here at home and to do the right thing helping other people. It's the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do, it's the strong thing to do," Biden said during a media briefing at the White House on Monday. "We want to lead the world with our values, with this demonstration of our innovation and ingenuity, and the fundamental decency of the American people."

As more and more Americans get vaccinated against COVID-19, the Biden administration has been starting to help other nations get their populations vaccinated as the pandemic worsens globally. Biden said the vaccines would be shipped by the end of June, when the United States has enough for all of its citizens, the *Times* reported.

In February, Biden said a \$2 billion U.S. contribution would go toward a global coronavirus vaccine initiative, *CNN* reported. The funding will provide support to COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access, known as COVAX. Biden also pledged an additional \$2 billion in funding contingent on contributions from other nations and dose delivery targets being met, *CNN* said.

A staggering 11 billion doses are needed to vaccinate 70 percent of the world's population, according to Duke University researchers, the *Times* reported. Only about 1.7 billion have been produced so far, the analytics firm Airfinity estimated.

"It's great to share, but redistributing 20 million existing doses has little impact on the global demand for the 10-to-15 billion doses needed," Lori Wallach, who oversees global trade work for advocacy organization Public Citizen, told the *Washington Post*. "Obviously, it's better to share than not, but it's like offering 20 million bites from our existing slice of pizza when... we need to be getting a bunch of new pizza production lines going as fast as possible."

In the United States, the vaccination picture is much brighter. Biden has said there will be enough vaccine supply for every American adult by the end of this month. As of Wednesday, 125.4 million Americans were fully vaccinated and over 56 percent of adults had received at least one dose, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration also recently approved the Pfizer vaccine for adolescents ages 12 to 15.

As of Thursday, the U.S. [coronavirus](#) case count passed 33 million, while the death toll neared 588,000, according to a tally from Johns Hopkins University. Worldwide, nearly 164.9 million cases had been reported by Wednesday, with nearly 3.4 million people dead from COVID-19.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [new coronavirus](#).

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