

# FDA expected to allow mix n' match COVID vaccines

October 19 2021

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Food and Drug Administration plans to

announce Wednesday that people can mix and match their COVID vaccines and booster shots, a move that would give health officials more flexibility as they try to immunize as many Americans as possible.

The FDA wouldn't recommend one [vaccine](#) over another but might say it's preferable to use the same [booster](#) as the vaccine first given when possible, but vaccine providers will be able to use their discretion when giving shots, officials with knowledge of the plan told *The New York Times*.

Last month, the FDA authorized booster shots of the two-dose Pfizer vaccine. The agency is expected to authorize boosters of the two-dose Moderna and the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines by Wednesday, and it could also give the [green light](#) to mixing and matching booster doses at that point, according to the *Times*.

In a presentation last week that hinted at a mix-and-match strategy, federal [health officials](#) presented findings from a National Institutes of Health study looking at that possibility to an FDA advisory committee.

The study showed that people who initially received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine followed by a Moderna booster had a 76-fold increase in antibodies in 15 days, compared with a fourfold increase after a booster of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, the *Times* reported.

A Moderna booster also triggered higher antibody levels in Pfizer recipients than a third injection of the Pfizer vaccine, while a Pfizer booster increased antibody levels in Moderna recipients about as high as a third Moderna shot, the study said.

The researchers cautioned that the findings shouldn't be used to conclude that any particular combination of vaccines is better, the *Times* reported.

The study "was not powered or designed to compare between groups," Dr. Kirsten Lyke, a professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, who presented the data, told the *Times*.

And experts noted that the preliminary results were short-term findings from small groups of people and focused only on antibody levels—just one measure of immune response, the *Times* reported.

The issue of COVID-19 booster shots will be addressed by a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory committee on Thursday, and that agency will then issue its own recommendations about who should get the extra shots.

A critical question remains: If Moderna is used as a booster for Johnson & Johnson recipients, should it be a half dose of the regular shot—the dosage that will be authorized for Moderna boosters—or should it be a full dose, which was the amount tested in the NIH study, the *Washington Post* reported.

With the impending decisions from the FDA and CDC, tens of millions more Americans should soon be eligible for booster shots, according to the *Times*.

**More information:** Visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for more on [COVID vaccines](#).

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Citation: FDA expected to allow mix n' match COVID vaccines (2021, October 19) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-10-fda-covid-vaccines.html>

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