

Moderna or Pfizer booster works better for people vaccinated with J&J: study

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People who received Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine may benefit from a booster dose of Pfizer or Moderna, preliminary results of a US study published Wednesday showed.

The study, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), was eagerly awaited in the United States because it looked at the possibility of "mixing" vaccines—using a different vaccine than the initial doses for the [booster](#) shot—which is not currently allowed in the country.

The study was conducted on 458 adults who had been vaccinated with one of three US-approved brands (Pfizer, Moderna or J&J) for at least 12 weeks.

These three groups were each divided into three new groups to receive one of the available vaccines as a booster. The nine groups consisted of about 50 people each.

Researchers then analyzed antibody levels 15 days after the booster shot.

For people originally inoculated with J&J, antibody levels were four times higher after a J&J booster, 35 times higher after a Pfizer booster and 76 times higher after a Moderna booster.

And [antibody levels](#) for those who had originally received Moderna shots were higher "irrespective of the booster vaccine administered," when compared with those who had initially received Pfizer or J&J, the study said.

Additionally, "no safety concerns were identified" after booster doses were administered, it found.

The study, which has not yet been peer-reviewed, has several limitations, however.

The number of participants was small, and the [immune response](#) could evolve over time, beyond the 15 days observed during the study.

"Important not to get too carried away with the findings," tweeted Peter Hotez, a professor at Baylor College of Medicine.

Results from trials on a second J&J [booster shot](#) conducted by the company itself were "impressive," he said.

The NIH study should fuel discussions by a US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) expert committee, which is scheduled to consider applications for a booster dose from Moderna and J&J on Thursday and Friday, respectively.

A booster from Pfizer has already been approved in the United States for certain populations, such as people aged 65 or older, adults with high-risk medical conditions and those in jobs where they are frequently exposed to the coronavirus.

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