

# Moderna begins testing omicron-matched COVID shots in adults

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A sign marks an entrance to a Moderna building in Cambridge, Mass., on Monday, May 18, 2020. On Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022, the pharmaceutical company announced it has begun testing an omicron-specific version of its COVID-19 vaccine in healthy adults, the same week that competitor Pfizer began similar research with its reformulated shots. Credit: AP Photo/Bill Sikes, File

Moderna has begun testing an omicron-specific COVID-19 booster in

healthy adults.

The company announced Wednesday that the first participant had received a dose. Earlier this week, competitor Pfizer [began a similar study](#) of its own reformulated shots.

It's not clear whether global health authorities will order a change to the vaccine recipe in the wake of the hugely contagious omicron variant. The original vaccines still offer good protection against death and severe illness. [Studies in the U.S.](#) and elsewhere show a booster dose strengthens that protection and improves the chances of avoiding even a milder infection.

Moderna pointed to a small study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on Wednesday that showed antibodies able to target omicron persisted for six months after a booster dose, although the levels were dropping.

Moderna's new study will enroll about 600 people who already have received either two doses of the company's original shots or two plus a [booster](#) dose. All the volunteers will receive a dose of the experimental omicron-matched version.

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