



CITY of NORTHAMPTON
Department of Health & Human Service
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For Immediate Release: September 9, 2022

City of Northampton Department of Health and Human Services Bivalent Booster Clinics Start Monday, September 13, 2022

The Northampton Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will offer the new COVID bivalent booster vaccines twice weekly starting Monday, September 12, 2022, on Mondays and Thursdays through October at the Elks Lodge, 17 Spring Street, Florence, MA. Both the Pfizer bivalent booster for people ages 12 and older and the Moderna bivalent booster for people ages 18 and older will be available.

As the new bivalent booster doses have been tailored to prevent more spread of COVID, including omicron variants, and continue to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, Commissioner Merridith O'Leary says, "Now more than ever is the time to get boosted. Our department is happy to be able to serve the public with the new bivalent boosters, which will help prevent the spread of disease. Along with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the CDC, I strongly recommend that anyone ages 12 and up soon as possible."

Appointments will be available on Mondays between 2-6 pm and on Thursdays between 10 am-4 pm. Make an appointment online at <https://www.northamptonma.gov/2219/Vaccine-Clinics>, or if you cannot schedule an appointment online, please call 413-587-1314 between 9 am-2 pm on Tuesday through Friday. If our appointment staff member cannot pick up when you call, please leave a message, and someone will call back within 3 business days to register your appointment.

What you need to know to make an appointment and receive a booster shot:

- COVID vaccines are free to the public.
- **Anyone who has health insurance will need your insurance card** to make your appointment; health insurance is billed an administration fee to run the clinics. **You will not be turned away if you do not have health insurance.**
- **Bring your past vaccine record to the clinic.** You will need the date of your past vaccines to make an appointment, AND you will be required to show documentation of your past vaccinations at the clinics. Either a paper or digital vaccine record is acceptable. To find your vaccination record visit <https://www.myvaxrecords.mass.gov/> or contact your primary care provider's web portal or nurse line for a copy of your record to save time at the clinic. Boosters will not be given without proof of previous vaccination.

When to get the new booster?

The CDC recommends the new bivalent boosters for anyone over 12 who is at least 2 months past their most recent booster dose or completion of the "primary series" doses of the original vaccines. Individuals with a recent COVID infection should wait until they are out of their 5-day isolation period with symptoms improving or better; the DHHS vaccine clinics require that you wait past 10 days where there is reduced risk for spread to protect the public, staff, and volunteers at the local clinics.

People who recently had a SARS-CoV-2 infection may consider delaying any particular COVID vaccine dose by 3 months from when symptoms began or their positive test (if the infection was asymptomatic). According to the CDC, "Studies have shown that increased time between infection and vaccination may result in an

improved immune response to vaccination. Also, a low risk of reinfection has been observed in the weeks to months following infection.”

Public Health Nurse Kate Kelly states, “We will welcome anyone at least 2 months past their most recent appropriate vaccine dose. However, individuals who have recently had a COVID infection might consult their primary care provider or specialist for advice on their own risk and booster timing. A person’s history such as being at high risk of COVID-19 severe disease, local factors such as our community’s current COVID-19 community level, or the specific characteristics of the current virus strain could impact when a person should or should not delay getting a COVID-19 vaccination. Our staff does not provide individualized medical advice at COVID clinics.”

The Northampton DHHS COVID Vaccine clinics still provide primary doses of the original vaccines for anyone ages 6 months through adulthood. Appointments are available on Mondays for the first, second, and third doses of Pfizer or Moderna vaccines for each age group. (Third doses are recommended for certain moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals.)

For more information, visit <https://northamptonma.gov/2104/Covid-19-Information>, or you can contact the DHHS at 413-587-1214.

Merridith A. O’Leary, Public Health Commissioner