

Vaccine booster shots

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In news

Recently, Pfizer has reached out to US regulators to authorise a booster dose of its Covid-19 vaccine within the next month.

What is a vaccine booster?

Vaccine booster shot is a means of strengthening one's immune system against a particular pathogen. It may be exactly the same original vaccine, in which case its goal is to increase the magnitude of protection by producing more antibodies.

The shot i.e or altered genetic blueprint of the germ triggers one's immune system to attack the foreign organism like it would if you actually got the disease.

What does a Vaccine booster do?

- It gives the memory cells the crucial signal to re-engage when the virus attacks.
- This can be useful whether the booster contains the original vaccine or something different.
- If it contains the original one, it'll amplify the signal, increasing the number of antibodies produced
- If it contains a tweaked recipe, it will train the cells to recognise new features of the virus and produce antibodies, should one be exposed to a newer variant.

When and who needs it?

- The booster shots are only for the fully-vaccinated.
- These boosters will be particularly helpful for the **elderly and immunocompromised people** whose bodies were unable to mount a robust protection against the virus following the first two shots.
- If there are studies showing that a new variant can

sneak past the antibodies created by a specific vaccine, the need of a tweaked booster shot arises then.

- Studies have shown that a person getting a booster shot does not necessarily have to opt for the same vaccine he had taken originally.

Countries which approved booster shot

- Countries like the United Arab Emirates, Thailand or Bahrain which had inoculated most of its population with the Oxford Astrazeneca doses have already decided to offer a booster shot.
- Even the United Kingdom which has approved the Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson and Oxford AstraZeneca vaccines is already planning to give out boosters to those aged 50 and above before the winter.

WHO response on booster shot

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