



COVID-19 Vaccines and MS Video Series

Why Get a Booster Shot?

Featuring:

Barry Hendin, MD

Barry Hendin:

Hi, I'm Barry Hendin. I'm Chief Medical Officer for MSAA. In addition, I'm a clinical professor of neurology at the University of Arizona, I run the MS Clinic at Banner University Medical Center and have a private practice, MS Center of Arizona.

I'm not sure that I can do justice to all of the complexity of the variants that have occurred and the variants that are going to occur in COVID 19.

We began with a single virus that has mutated in multiple forms. We're aware that we haven't seen the end of those mutations. We've been able to keep up with those mutations by better health habits, better medications, and better vaccinations.

You're going to hear two terms occasionally. One is the additional vaccination versus a booster.

We use an additional shot, a third shot for people who are immunocompromised and can't really mount a proper immune response. Some of medications we use can reduce the immune response, and in those situations, it may be appropriate to take a third, which is an additional vaccination.

The booster we think of as being the natural add-on medication that you'll take generally five months after you've been fully vaccinated because we know that the vaccination response will wane over time. The booster for everybody is the protection against that waning.

With regards to preference for one booster over another, the answer is you take the booster that's available to you. They all work or else they wouldn't have been FDA approved. If you've had one booster, you can take that same one or an alternative approved booster medication.

It's very clear that we are not finished with COVID. This virus that has the ability to mutate and change. We will need periodic boosters in the time ahead, and the boosters themselves may change so that they keep up with the rapidly evolving nature of COVID 19.