



## Covid-19 Vaccine Booster Shots

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### Why in News

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Recently, **Pfizer and BioNTech** have announced that they would seek regulatory authorization for a third booster dose of their **Covid-19** vaccine (**BNT162b2**).

This development comes amid the global spread of highly transmissible **Delta strain of Covid-19**.

### Key Points

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- **Booster Shots:**
  - A booster 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**.
  - Scientists **can also tweak what goes into the booster** if they are aiming to **protect people from a new variant** — a version of the virus that's mutated significantly from the original version people were vaccinated against.
  - These shots are **only for the fully-vaccinated**.
- **Need:**
  - 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.
  - Secondly, 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.
- **Concerns:**
  - Booster shots are **yet to get a nod** from the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**.
  - In fact, the WHO has **expressed caution** in encouraging third doses.
  - Such a recommendation is unnecessary and premature given the **paucity of data on booster shots** and the fact that **high-risk individuals in much of the world still haven't been fully vaccinated**.

**Source: IE**