

Pfizer Says Fourth COVID Booster Dose May Be Needed for Omicron Variant as Profits Soar



Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said Wednesday people may need a fourth dose of its COVID vaccine sooner than expected after a preliminary study showed the new Omicron variant can undermine antibody protection in those with only doses.

Pfizer and BioNTech released results from its initial lab study Wednesday showing a third dose was protective against the new variant, but the initial two-dose series dropped significantly in its ability to protect against the new strain. However, the two-dose series likely still offers protection against getting severely sick from omicron, the companies said.

“Three doses against Omicron are almost equivalent to the two doses’ effectiveness against ... the original variant,” Bourla said in an [interview with TODAY](#). “If we need a new vaccine ...

we will be able to have a very good one," he added.

Bourla said the [preliminary study](#) was based on a synthetic, lab-created copy of the variant and more data is needed from tests using the actual virus. Real-world results will be more accurate and are expected in the next two weeks, Bourla said.

"When we see real-world data, will determine if the Omicron is well covered by the third dose and for how long. And the second point, I think we will need a fourth dose," Bourla told CNBC's "[Squawk Box](#)."

Bourla [ironically predicted](#) a fourth dose would be needed 12 months after the third dose, but said with Omicron, "we may need it faster."

Boula said what's most important is the rollout of third doses of its COVID vaccine and said the booster and its antiviral pill, Paxlovid, will help control COVID during the Winter.

"A third dose will give very good protection I believe," Bourla said, and treatments such as Pfizer's oral antiviral pill, Paxlovid, will help prevent hospitalizations and control COVID during the winter.

Pfizer submitted its application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for Emergency Use Authorization of Paxlovid last month. The Biden Administration has already [purchased 10 million courses](#) of the drug even though the FDA has not signed off on the drug.

[Pfizer stocks](#) rose Wednesday amid news the company's COVID vaccine works against the Omicron variant after three doses.

"[There is] great news from Pfizer that a booster will work in adding solid protection against Omicron and stocks are celebrating," said Peter Boockvar, chief investment officer of Bleakley Advisory Group.

Pfizer's [revenue](#) could reach \$101.3 billion in 2022, thanks to

the company's COVID vaccine, produced with BioNTech, and an antiviral drug, SVB Leerink analyst Geoffrey Porges projected.

That level of revenue is unprecedented in the pharmaceutical industry. Of the \$101.3 billion, oral COVID drug Paxlovid is estimated to contribute \$24.2 billion and COVID vaccine Comirnaty \$29.7 billion.