

[Just 6% in 18-59 group have taken booster shots in Haryana](#)

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GURUGRAM: Over 7 lakh precaution doses of the Covid vaccine have been administered in Haryana since the drive was rolled out on April 10, which constitutes 64% of the 60-plus eligible population but just 6.2% of the total number of people in the 18-59 age group who were supposed to have taken their third shot by now. In the state, Gurugram has the highest coverage in both age groups (28% for 18-59 and 100% for 60-plus).

Recipients who have completed nine months after taking both doses of Covid vaccine are eligible for the third jab. With the number of daily infections being reported seeing an upswing again, doctors are urging people to take their booster shots at the earliest. According to data from the Co-WIN portal, 33.1 lakh people aged between 18 to 59 years were eligible for booster doses in Haryana as of Monday. Officials from the health department said response to booster doses has been very low for this category (2.2 lakh, so far) due to the nine-month gap between the second and third shots, high number of breakthrough infections and low Covid hospitalisation rate. Moreover, daily cases are not as high as they were during the second wave, due to which many people are opting not to take the third dose, they said. As of Monday, the state has inoculated nearly 7 lakh people with booster shots.

This includes nearly 4 lakh people in the 60-plus category (64% of the eligible population), as well as 76,776 healthcare workers (30%) and 50,467 frontline workers (20%). Haryana has around 5.9 lakh senior citizens, 2.5 lakh frontline workers and 2.6 lakh healthcare workers who are eligible for the third shot. "The pace of booster dose vaccination is still slow, especially in the 18-59 age group, because Covid inoculation isn't mandatory anymore. Secondly, as many people got breakthrough infections, they are reluctant to get another jab," state immunisation officer Dr Virender Ahlawat said. In the 18-59 category, the five districts which have administered the maximum doses include Gurugram (1,12,058 doses), followed by

Faridabad (25,216), Charkhi Dadri (14,670), Ambala (13,217) and Rewari (12,586). At 829, Nuh has given the least booster doses, followed by Fatehabad (923), Jind (1,002), Palwal (2,114) and Sirsa (2,216). Gurugram has the highest booster dose coverage in the state in the 60-plus category. While 72,421 lakh recipients in the 60-plus category were eligible for third doses, 83,503 (115%) have taken the shots. The additional doses have been attributed to the floating population. According to health department data, 12,693 (26.5%) of 45,616 eligible healthcare workers have got their jabs in the city. Among frontline workers, 17,110 (37.5%) of 48,353 have taken the shot. While 4,02,112 people are eligible for the third jab in the 18-59 group, just 28% have been inoculated. Chief medical officer Virender Yadav said many eligible people haven't taken third doses yet as they recently tested positive for Covid and need to wait for another two months before vaccination. "People are not taking the jab when it is due. We have observed that vaccination gains pace whenever a Covid wave hits the city. People aren't interested in taking the booster shot at present." Asked how they are managing any doses which might be nearing expiry due to few takers for booster jabs, he said: "So far, we have not witnessed any crisis related to doses getting expired.

Also, the firm can replace the stock if the vaccines near expiry. We are focusing on rural areas and the cohort system to use our booster doses." Even though the booster dose vaccination for 18-59 is slow, private hospitals carrying out the drive said they have been able to manage the stock efficiently. "We place our demand to the Centre after analysing how much we can inoculate. Also, we have tied up with residential societies and corporates for booster vaccination drives," said Arpita Mukherjee, vice-president (operations), Max Hospital. Corporates have been encouraging employees to take booster shots as they return to work. "We organised vaccination camps for the majority of our employees and their family members. We also raised awareness about health, sanitisation and safety measures to be followed and supported them with testing facilities for those who were unwell," said Tapan Singhel, MD and CEO, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd. "We take extreme accountability and pride in promoting organisation-wide initiatives like conducting vaccination drives, free RT-PCR tests for employees and their families, employee assistance programs and flexible health benefits. All our employees have been inoculated and a majority of eligible ones have taken the booster dose," said Srinivas Reddy P, senior vice-president (people and culture), Pristyn Care.