



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc  
*Commissioner*

August 10, 2021

Dear Pediatrician Care Providers:

We are writing to ask again for your help in vaccinating adolescent New Yorkers against COVID-19. It is critical adolescents age 12 and older get vaccinated as soon as possible to be fully protected as the school year is starting. Parents consider you, their doctor and pediatric care provider, a trusted source of information about COVID-19 vaccines. We need your help to increase vaccination rates in adolescents.

The City is conducting outreach to provide adolescents and parents with accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines. We are also supporting vaccination pop-up sites across the city and launching a public media campaign to encourage adolescents and families to get vaccinated.

What you can do to help with these efforts:

- **Reach out to and engage the families you care for.** They want to hear from you that vaccination is safe and effective.
- **For vaccinating providers, take every opportunity to administer vaccine,** even if you cannot use the remaining doses in a vial. Coadminister COVID-19 vaccine with other vaccines needed to bring adolescents up-to-date and in compliance with school immunization requirements.
- **For nonvaccinating providers, help adolescents find a Pfizer vaccination site.** See [here](#) for details on finding a site, scheduling in-home appointments, and other logistics.
- **Enroll in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program.** Parents trust you to vaccinate their children. Enrolling is easy, and Pfizer vaccine can now be ordered in as few as 150 doses.

Tools and materials to support you:

- [COVID-19 Vaccination Program FAQ](#) provides answers to enrollment questions
- [Speaking With Parents About COVID-19 Adolescent Vaccination](#) provides tips for speaking with parents and answering frequently asked questions.
- Fact sheets, like [FAQs About COVID-19 Vaccines for Families and Educators](#), can be given to adolescent patients and their parents. See [here](#) for other fact sheets.
- Visit [nyc.gov/health/covidvaccineprovider](https://nyc.gov/health/covidvaccineprovider) and [nyc.gov/covidvaccine](https://nyc.gov/covidvaccine) for up-to-date resources and information.

Thank you for your partnership in this historic vaccination campaign.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jane R. Zucker'.

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc  
Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Immunization



## COVID-19 Vaccination Program Frequently Asked Questions

### **Do I need to be enrolled in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program to receive COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes. All providers who would like to receive COVID-19 vaccines and vaccinate their patients must be enrolled using the [Vaccine Provider Agreement System \(VPAS\)](#).

### **How long does the COVID-19 Vaccination Program enrollment process take?**

It should take approximately 30 minutes. Once submitted, the NYC Health Department approves applications within about 24 hours. If there are errors or questions about your application, approval may take longer.

### **Do I need an ultra-cold freezer to store the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine?**

No. Pfizer vaccine can be stored in a regular freezer for 2 weeks and in the refrigerator for an additional 31 days.

### **Can I receive less than 450 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes, the NYC Health Department can send trays of 150 doses of Pfizer vaccine. Email [COVIDVax@health.nyc.gov](mailto:COVIDVax@health.nyc.gov) to request 150-day trays.

### **Do I need to screen for Vaccines for Children Eligibility for pediatric patients?**

No. Screening for Vaccines for Children (VFC) eligibility is not required.

### **What is the insurance reimbursement for administering COVID vaccine?**

The Medicaid administration fee for COVID-19 vaccination has increased and is currently \$40 per dose. This is retroactive for services not already reimbursed and applies to Medicaid managed care and fee for service. Many commercial plans also reimburse for COVID-19 vaccination. Check with individual health plans about their reimbursement policy.

### **Do I need to report the COVID-19 vaccine administered?**

Yes. All COVID-19 vaccine doses administered must be reported to the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) within 24 hours. Patient consent is not required.

### **What do I need to connect my electronic health record system to the CIR and report COVID-19 vaccine doses administered?**

Please refer to the [CIR HL7 reporting requirements guide](#) for COVID-19.

### **Can COVID-19 vaccines be administered with other routine vaccines?**

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines may be administered to children or adults along with other vaccines, including flu and HPV vaccine, without regard to timing.



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### **Can I administer one dose of Pfizer vaccine and one dose of Moderna to a patient?**

No. The vaccines are not authorized for mixing vaccine types. If a patient receives one dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, they should receive a second dose of the same vaccine three or four weeks later, respectively, to complete the vaccination series.

### **Will I be fined if I do not administer the amount of COVID-19 vaccine doses received within a specific timeframe or if I cannot use all doses in a vial?**

No. There is no longer any timeframe by which providers must administer COVID-19 vaccine doses received. Providers are encouraged to use every opportunity to vaccinate every eligible patient. Providers can open a vial to administer a dose to a patient and will not be penalized for wastage.

### **Where can I find guidance regarding COVID-19 vaccine storage and handling?**

Guidance changes regularly. Refer to CDC's [Product Info by U.S. Vaccine](#) webpage for the latest information.

### **What is the protocol if a patient has an allergic reaction or other health issue after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine?**

Providers are required to have appropriate medical treatment readily available for severe allergic reactions including anaphylaxis at their vaccination sites. See [Management of Anaphylaxis at COVID-19 Vaccination Sites | CDC](#). In addition, providers are required to report serious adverse events regardless of causality to [VAERS](#) and are encouraged to report all other adverse events. Providers are also asked to give information to patients regarding the CDC's [v-safe](#) program, an online tool through which vaccine recipients can report side effects and other information.

### **Many of my patients don't want to be vaccinated. What resources are available to help talk to patients?**

Providers are one of the most trusted source of COVID-19 vaccination information and provider recommendation is one of the strongest predictors of vaccination. Please refer to the [Vaccine Communications Resources for Providers](#) for resources to help speak to your patients. Additional information, including patient handouts in multiple languages, is available at [nyc.gov/covidvaccine](https://nyc.gov/covidvaccine).

### **I have additional questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccines. Where can I get more information?**

Please refer to the [COVID-19 Vaccines: Frequently Asked Questions for Providers](#) and other resources available on the Health Department's [COVID-19 vaccine provider webpage](#).

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

8.6.21