



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc
Commissioner

January 6, 2022

Dear Colleague,

This week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) made three updates to its [recommendations](#) for use of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine:

- Children and adolescents ages 12 to 17 years should receive a single booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine. At this time, only the Pfizer vaccine is authorized for primary and booster doses for ages 12 to 17 years.
- The interval for a booster dose after completing the Pfizer primary series has been shortened from 6 months to 5 months for people ages 12 years and older.
 - The booster intervals for people who received the Johnson & Johnson (2 months) or Moderna (6 months) primary series have not changed.
 - There is also no change to the guidance that people can receive any of the three approved or authorized vaccines for their booster dose, though mRNA vaccines (Pfizer or Moderna) are preferred.
- Moderately or severely immunocompromised children ages 5 to 11 years should receive a third primary dose of the Pfizer vaccine 28 days after their second shot. At this time, only the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for children ages 5 to 11 years.

All three updates followed revisions to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s Emergency Use Authorization for this vaccine and are reflected in the revised FDA Pfizer [fact sheets](#) for recipients, caregivers and health care providers. The data underlying these updates are described below.

Boosters for children and adolescents ages 12 to 17 years

The Advisory Committee of Immunization Practices (ACIP) reviewed the most recent [data](#) from three U.S. safety monitoring systems, including data on safety after the primary vaccination series in children and adolescents ages 12 to 15 years and after booster doses in people ages 16 to 24 years. ACIP also reviewed data from Israel for children and adolescents ages 12 through 15 years who received a booster dose. No new safety concerns for these age groups were identified. Significant increases in COVID-19 cases due to the omicron variant bolstered support for the updated recommendation.

Booster interval shortened to 5 months after Pfizer primary series

Laboratory data indicate that a Pfizer booster dose increases neutralizing antibody titers to the omicron variant among people ages 18 years and older. Receiving a booster dose at 5 months may enable increased protection sooner against the rapidly spreading variant. Evidence from Israel suggests a Pfizer booster dose was effective against COVID-19 [infection](#) and [death](#) among people who received a booster dose at least 5 months after completion of the primary series.



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Third primary dose for immunocompromised children ages 5 to 11 years

Children ages 5 to 11 years who are moderately or severely immunocompromised may not respond adequately to the two-dose primary vaccination series. The potential effectiveness of a third dose in immunocompromised children ages 5 to 11 years was extrapolated from data in adults, as well as reassuring safety data from the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#) and [v-safe](#) for the 8.7 million primary COVID-19 vaccination doses already administered to children ages 5 to 11 years in the U.S.

We strongly encourage all health care providers in New York City (NYC) to counsel their unvaccinated patients about COVID-19 vaccines and to offer COVID-19 vaccination in their practices. COVID-19 vaccine counseling is now [covered](#) by New York State Medicaid. Answers to frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccination program in NYC are available [here](#). A recent presentation on overcoming enrollment and administration challenges for NYC pediatric providers, co-hosted by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the American Academy of Pediatrics, can be viewed [here](#) (download the slides [here](#)).

Thank you for your commitment to promoting and protecting the health of New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

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

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