NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Ashwin Vasan, MD, PhD
Commissioner

May 20, 2022

Dear Colleague,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its clinical considerations to recommend that **children ages 5 to 11 years should receive a single 10-mcg booster dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at least 5 months after completing the primary series.**[a] This update follows a recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and revisions to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s Emergency Use Authorization. FDA's fact sheets for Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 years for recipients and caregivers and health care providers have been revised.

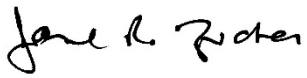
In addition, the CDC strengthened its COVID-19 vaccination guidance to recommend that **everyone ages 50 years and older who received any COVID-19 booster dose and everyone ages 12 years and older who are moderately or severely immunocompromised should receive a second booster dose using an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine** to help restore protection that may wane over time. Previously, these populations were recommended to consider a second booster dose based on their individual circumstances. This strengthened recommendation is in response to a steep and substantial increase in hospitalizations for older Americans over the past few weeks.

Ongoing safety monitoring data in children ages 5 to 11 years continue to demonstrate the COVID-19 vaccine is safe in this age group and that the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines for children continue to outweigh the risks. A study of children ages 5 to 11 years also supported the safety and immunogenicity of a booster dose after a median follow-up time of 1.3 months. During the Omicron-predominant period, two-dose vaccine effectiveness against infection declined quickly in both children ages 5 to 11 years and adolescents ages 12 to 15 years. A booster dose in adolescents significantly improved vaccine effectiveness against infection and emergency department and urgent care visits; there was insufficient data to assess the impact of a booster dose for adolescents against severe disease. Evidence among adults also shows that a booster dose improves protection across all outcomes studied.

The CDC continues to recommend that all unvaccinated children ages 5 years and older receive a COVID-19 vaccine primary series. In New York City, only 47% of children in this age group have completed the primary series. Children ages 5 to 11 years are at risk for severe illness from COVID-19, with more than 4.8 million reported cases and more than 15,000 hospitalizations, to date. In 2020, COVID-19 was a leading cause of death in children ages 5 to 11 years. Children who have received a COVID-19 vaccine primary series have significantly better outcomes than children who are unvaccinated, particularly against severe illness, and this pattern continued during the Omicron-predominant period.

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

Sincerely,



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

a. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine primary series for children ages 5 to 11 years consists of two doses (for children who are not moderately or severely immunocompromised) or three doses (for children who are moderately or severely immunocompromised).