



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

November 23, 2021

Dear Colleague,

On November 19, 2021, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated their recommendations for mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) COVID-19 booster doses for adults who completed an mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine primary series at least 6 months ago.

- All people ages 50 years and older and people ages 18 years and older residing in long-term care settings **should** receive a booster dose, given increased risk of COVID-19 complications in these groups.
- All people ages 18 to 49 years **may** receive a booster dose, based on individual risk-benefit assessment.

The CDC continues to recommend that all people who received one dose of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine **should** receive a booster dose at least 2 months after receipt of primary vaccination. Any of the three vaccines authorized or approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may be used for the booster dose. COVID-19 vaccine dosing and schedules are summarized [here](#).

Although data has shown waning mRNA vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic infection after the primary series, effectiveness against severe disease and hospitalization remains high. Updated [data](#) from approximately 10,000 participants ages 16 years and older in a Pfizer Phase 3 randomized controlled trial found the relative vaccine efficacy of the booster dose to be 95.3% against symptomatic COVID-19, with a median follow-up of 2.5 months after the booster dose. No Phase 3 booster efficacy data are available for the Moderna vaccine, but immunogenicity data demonstrate the ability to boost antibody levels in Moderna recipients. Myocarditis and other [safety](#) data after booster doses are reassuring and monitored closely.

In addition, on November 17, 2021, CDC issued Emergency Use Instructions and updated its [clinical considerations](#) to allow the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to be given as an additional primary or booster dose to certain people who completed a primary vaccine series with COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized or approved by the World Health Organization, but not by the FDA, and for COVID-19 vaccines for which a U.S. data and safety monitoring board or equivalent has independently confirmed efficacy (currently, Novavax COVID-19 vaccine).

In New York City, no one ages 18 years and older should be turned away from receiving a booster dose if requested. On November 15, the Health Department issued a Commissioner Advisory requesting that providers reach out to high-risk patients with an indication to receive a booster dose.

Finally, please remember that vaccination of unvaccinated individuals remains the top priority. 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