



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

February 28, 2022

Dear Colleague,

On February 22, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its [COVID-19 vaccination guidance](#) to recommend extending the interval between the first and second mRNA COVID-19 vaccine dose to 8 weeks for many people ages 12 to 64 years. This is an update from the FDA-approved or -authorized recommended interval of 3 weeks between primary Pfizer doses or 4 weeks between primary Moderna doses. [New data](#) from Canada and other countries indicate that many people ages 12 to 64 years—and especially males ages 12 to 39 years—would benefit from this revised vaccination schedule. The 8-week interval may help improve immunogenicity and increase vaccine effectiveness and durability of protection against infection and hospitalization. It may also help lower the small risk of myocarditis and pericarditis, which has been associated—mostly among adolescent and young adult males—with mRNA COVID-19 vaccination.

It is important to note this update does not apply to everyone. Providers should continue to recommend the 3-week or 4-week interval for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised, adults ages 65 years and older, and others who may need early protection due to concern about an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 or high levels of community transmission. The interval for children ages 5 to 11 years is 3 weeks and has not changed. People ages 12 years and older with moderate or severe immunocompromise should receive three doses in their mRNA primary vaccine series and should receive a booster dose with an mRNA vaccine at least 3 months after completing their third primary series dose.

Regardless of the interval between the first and second dose, mRNA vaccines are highly effective at reducing the risk of hospitalization and serious complications from COVID-19 infection. **People who have already received their primary mRNA series at the 3-week or 4-week interval remain well-protected and should stay [up to date](#) for optimal protection with a booster dose.**

Health care providers are a valued and trusted source of health information and can play a key role in a patient's decision to get vaccinated. 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