

Update to Recommendations Regarding COVID-19 Booster Vaccination

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TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Keara Klinepeter, Acting Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Update to Recommendations Regarding COVID-19 Vaccination
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This transmission is a “Health Update,” and provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

SUMMARY

- [Guidance](#) released on March 30, 2022 from the CDC updates COVID-19 booster vaccination guidance and allows for a second booster dose of an mRNA vaccine for certain populations.
- The dose of the second booster dose of the mRNA vaccines is the same as the first booster dose.
- Moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals 12 years of age and older may choose to receive an additional booster dose of an mRNA vaccine at least 4 months after the first booster dose.
- Patients 50 years of age and older may choose to receive an additional booster dose of an mRNA vaccine at least 4 months after the first booster dose.
- All patients who received the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine as their primary series and booster dose may receive an additional booster dose of an mRNA vaccine at least 4 months after the first Janssen booster dose.

If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

Background

Vaccination with COVID-19 vaccines is one of the most important ways patients can prevent infection, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. The [Pfizer BioNTech](#) COVID-19 vaccine received full FDA approval on August 23, 2021, the [Moderna](#) COVID-19 vaccine received full FDA approval on January 31, 2022 and the [Janssen](#) COVID-19 vaccine received an Emergency Use Authorization from the FDA on February 27, 2021. As more information is gathered over time about the effectiveness of these vaccines against COVID-19, guidance is updated to provide the maximum protection for patients. Data continue to support the importance of the booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19. According to the [CDC](#), during the omicron surge individuals who had received a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine were 21 times less likely to die from COVID-19 than the unvaccinated and were 7 times less likely to be hospitalized. On March 30, 2022, the CDC updated its COVID-19 vaccine [guidance](#) to improve protection for certain patient populations by making available a second booster dose at least four months after the first booster dose.

1. [Guidance](#) for all Booster Dosing of the mRNA Vaccines

- Currently the CDC recommends that booster doses be with either of the mRNA vaccines. The Janssen vaccine may be used for the first booster dose in [certain situations](#). The Janssen vaccine is not recommended for the second booster dose.
- Pfizer BioNTech vaccine (5 years and older):
 - Booster doses have only been approved for ages 12 and older.
 - The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine (ages 12 and older) booster dose is 30mcg which is the same dose as the primary series.
- Moderna vaccine (18 years and older):
 - The Moderna vaccine (ages 18 and older) booster dose is 50mcg which is half the dose of the primary series.

2. [Guidance](#) for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised Patients

Patients with [moderately to severely immunocompromising conditions](#) are at higher risk for morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19 and may not mount an adequate immune response to the traditional COVID-19 vaccine series. The following recommendations for this patient population should improve the protection and immune response for immunocompromised patients.

- The mRNA vaccines (Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna):
 - Moderately to severely immunocompromised patients ages 12 and older who received one of the mRNA vaccines as their primary series and their booster dose may receive a second booster dose of an mRNA vaccine at least **4 months** after the first booster dose.
 - Booster doses have only been approved for ages 12 and older.
 - The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine (ages 12 and older) booster dose is 30mcg which is the same dose as the primary series.

- The Moderna vaccine (ages 18 and older) booster dose is 50mcg which is half the dose of the primary series.
 - The Johnson and Johnson (Janssen) vaccine:
 - Moderately to severely immunocompromised patients ages 18 and older who received the Janssen vaccine as part of their primary series and who received a primary booster dose of either the Janssen vaccine or an mRNA vaccine may receive a second booster dose of an mRNA vaccine at least **4 months** after the first booster dose.
 - The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine booster dose is 30mcg which is the same dose as the primary series.
 - The Moderna vaccine booster dose is 50mcg which is half the dose of the primary series.
 - Current CDC recommendations do not support the use of the Janssen vaccine for the second booster dose
3. **Guidance for a second booster dose for immunocompetent patients who are 50 years of age and older who received an mRNA vaccine as their first booster dose.**
- Patients who are 50 years of age or older may choose to have a second booster dose of an mRNA vaccine at least 4 months after their first booster dose.
 - The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine booster dose is 30mcg which is the same dose as the primary series.
 - The Moderna vaccine booster dose is 50mcg which is half the dose of the primary series.
4. **Guidance for a second booster dose for immunocompetent patients aged 18-49 years who received Janssen as both their primary series and booster dose.**
- All patients who received the Janssen vaccine for both the primary series and booster dose may receive a second booster dose with an mRNA vaccine at least 4 months after the first Janssen vaccine booster dose.
 - The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine booster dose is 30mcg which is the same dose as the primary series.
 - The Moderna vaccine booster dose is 50mcg which is half the dose of the primary series.

If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of April 4, 2022 but may be modified in the future.