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

March 31, 2022

Dear Colleague,

On March 30, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its guidance to allow the following groups to receive a second mRNA booster dose at least 4 months after their first booster dose:

- People ages 50 years and older
- People ages 12 to 49 years who are moderately or severely immunocompromised

In addition, people ages 18 years and older who received a primary and booster dose of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine may receive one mRNA booster dose at least 4 months after their first booster dose.

People in the groups specified above may benefit from a second booster dose due to their increased risk for severe COVID-19. The full COVID-19 vaccination schedule for people who are not moderately or severely immunocompromised is posted here, and the schedule for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised is here.

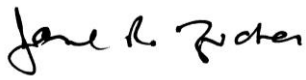
The CDC's updates follow those by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to the Pfizer and Moderna emergency use authorizations (EUAs) to allow second booster doses for these groups. The authorized booster dose is 30 mcg for the Pfizer vaccine and 50 mcg for the Moderna vaccine, regardless of which COVID-19 vaccine product(s) a person previously received. Updated fact sheets for the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines reflect these changes.

The recommendation for a second booster dose for mRNA vaccine recipients was informed by data from Israel. Immunogenicity data from an ongoing, open-label, non-randomized clinical study of 274 healthcare workers at one facility in Israel found a higher level of neutralizing antibody levels against SARS-CoV-2, including the delta and omicron variants, two weeks after a second Pfizer or Moderna booster dose, as compared with five months after the initial booster dose. The Israeli Ministry of Health did not identify any new safety concerns related to the approximately 700,000 Pfizer second booster doses administered to adults ages 18 years and older. The recommendation for a second booster dose for Johnson & Johnson vaccine recipients was informed by data from the U.S., which showed that effectiveness against severe COVID-19 was higher when an mRNA booster dose was administered to Johnson & Johnson primary vaccine recipients compared with people who received two doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Completion of a COVID-19 primary vaccine series and booster dose, when eligible, continue to be the most important steps people can take to protect themselves and others from COVID-19. During the recent omicron surge, people who received a single booster dose were 21 times less likely to die from COVID-19 and 7 times less likely to be hospitalized compared to people who were unvaccinated. Please continue to give your strong recommendation for COVID-19 vaccination to your patients.

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

Sincerely,



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