March 24, 2023

Dear Colleague,

Last week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a recommendation for children ages 6 months through 4 years who previously completed the full 3-dose monovalent Pfizer COVID-19 primary vaccination series to receive a booster dose of Pfizer’s updated (bivalent) COVID-19 vaccine.

This new booster recommendation only applies to children who completed Pfizer’s 3-dose COVID-19 monovalent primary series before December 9, 2022, and not to children vaccinated after that date who already received a bivalent dose as their third dose. With this update, all children in this age group who received Pfizer are now eligible and recommended to receive a bivalent vaccine, either as Dose 3 after monovalent Dose 1 and 2 or as a booster dose after monovalent Dose 1, 2 and 3. All children ages 6 months through 4 years who start a new Pfizer primary series should receive monovalent vaccine for Dose 1 and 2 and bivalent vaccine for Dose 3.

COVID-19 vaccine coverage for young children remains low throughout New York City, with only 7% of children ages 0 to 4 years with a completed primary series. Children younger than 2 years of age have higher COVID-19 hospitalization rates than older children, and COVID-19 vaccines continue to be the most effective tool we have to prevent serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is working hard to increase parent confidence in COVID-19 vaccines and improve vaccine uptake among young children. Please do your part by continuing to make a strong recommendation to parents to vaccinate their eligible children and ordering pediatric COVID-19 vaccines to have available at your facility.

If you do not have COVID-19 vaccine at your facility, refer patients to a vaccination site. To find a vaccination site, visit vaccinefinder.nyc.gov or call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692).

Thank you for continuing to promote and protect the health of New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene