



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
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Commissioner

2023 Health Advisory #22: 2023-2024 Updated COVID-19 Vaccines Recommended for Everyone 6 Months of Age and Older

- Everyone ages 6 months and older should receive a 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine.
- It is especially important to ensure that those at the highest risk for severe COVID-19 get vaccinated, including older adults (≥65 years), people who are pregnant, people who are immunocompromised, people with certain underlying medical conditions, and people with certain disabilities that may increase their risk for chronic conditions or immunodeficiency.
- With commercialization of COVID-19 vaccines, providers must purchase vaccine directly from manufacturers.
- People who do not have insurance may access no-cost vaccination services at specified locations across NYC.

September 18, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

On September 12, 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended use of 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccines for everyone 6 months of age and older. The updated vaccines are monovalent products targeted at Omicron XBB.1.5. However, data show that the updated vaccines increase the immune response against currently circulating variants, including BA.2.86.

Currently the only Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved or authorized updated COVID-19 vaccine products are the Moderna and Pfizer mRNA vaccines. The FDA is reviewing an application for authorization of an updated Novavax vaccine. **Bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines targeted at older variants are no longer authorized or approved.**

COVID-19 vaccines remain our best defense against COVID-19 and have saved millions of lives. The [benefits of COVID-19 vaccination](#) have consistently outweighed the risks across all age groups. And yet, COVID-19 vaccine uptake has been low. [Recent data presented by CDC](#) show that:

- COVID-19 vaccine confidence remains low, with more than one-third of surveyed persons stating they probably or definitely will not receive the updated vaccine.
- Compared to other adult vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines were recommended the least by health care providers.
- Patients who received a provider recommendation were more likely to receive a COVID-19 vaccine overall and by racial and ethnic groups.

Providers are our [vaccine champions](#) and are critical to the success of the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccination campaign. As you have been consistently doing for other recommended vaccines, continue to assess the COVID-19 immunization status of all patients at every clinical encounter, give a strong recommendation in the spirit of prevention, discuss patients' concerns *without judgement*, and help make vaccination convenient and accessible by offering it on site if you can or assisting people to find a vaccination site. The COVID-19, flu, and (for people 60 years and older) RSV vaccines can be co-administered so incorporate all three prevention opportunities this respiratory season.

Everyone ages 6 months and older should receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine. More specifically:

- Everyone ages 5 years and older should receive 1 dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of what doses they have previously received or if they have received no prior doses. One dose is all that is needed for patients to be up to date.
- Children ages 6 months through 4 years should complete a multi-dose initial series (2 doses of Moderna or 3 doses of Pfizer), with at least one dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine.
- People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised should complete a 3-dose initial series with at least one dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine and may receive 1 or more additional updated doses.
- Additional details are available in [CDC's COVID-19 Clinical Considerations](#).

It is especially important to ensure that those at the highest risk for severe COVID-19 get vaccinated. This includes older adults (≥ 65 years), people who are pregnant, people who are immunocompromised, people with certain underlying medical conditions, and people with certain disabilities that may increase their risk for chronic conditions or immunodeficiency. However, severe outcomes continue to occur in all age groups, including in people with no underlying medical conditions. COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have been steadily rising in New York City and nationally since July 2023. We anticipate further increases as we enter respiratory virus season.

With the introduction of updated vaccine products, COVID-19 vaccines are now being distributed via the [commercial market](#). Providers need to purchase vaccine for most patients through the manufacturers, as they do for other vaccines. COVID-19 vaccines remain at no cost for most people through private health insurance plans, Medicare, and Medicaid. No-cost vaccination services for people who are uninsured and underinsured continue to be available throughout New York City, through Health Department programs, and the federal Bridge Access Program. Refer patients to [vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](#) to find a vaccination site such as a pharmacy or health center, including sites that offer no cost vaccination for people who are uninsured and underinsured.

All providers planning to vaccinate children ages 18 years and younger should ensure they are enrolled in the NYC Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. The VFC program distributes no-cost vaccines to providers for children who are eligible for or enrolled in Medicaid, enrolled in Child Health Plus B, uninsured, underinsured, and American Indian or Alaska Native. Report all vaccines administered to children 18 years and younger to the [Citywide Immunization Registry \(CIR\)](#). Report vaccines administered to adults 19 years and older to the CIR with patient consent.

Ensuring all New Yorkers have access to health care is a top priority of the NYC Health Department. Refer your patients for free assistance to sign up for low- or no-cost health insurance by having them call 311, text CoveredNYC (SeguroNYC for Spanish) to 877877, or visit [nyc.gov/getcoverednyc](#). To connect with a Health Department Certified Application Counselor, visit [nyc.gov/health/healthcoverage](#). This is especially important considering ongoing Medicaid redeterminations.

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

Sincerely,



Michelle Morse, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer



Celia Quinn, MD, MPH
Deputy Commissioner, Division of Disease Control