COVID-19 Pandemic, Update # 46
Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Dose Recommendations

Key Points and Recommendations:

- All COVID-19 vaccines continue to be highly effective at preventing infection, hospitalization, and death; but some people may benefit from a booster dose (see Background information below)
- On September 22nd, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine ("Pfizer vaccine") for use as a booster dose for certain people who have undergone their primary vaccination series with the Pfizer vaccine
- On September 24th, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended the following for Pfizer vaccine booster doses:
  1. People 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings should receive a booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after completion of their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series (formal recommendation for a booster)
  2. People aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions should receive a booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after completion of their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series (formal recommendation for a booster)
  3. People aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions may receive a booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after completion of their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks (permissive recommendation based on an individual’s own assessment of their risks and benefits)
  4. People aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting may receive a booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after completion of their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks (permissive recommendation based on an individual’s own assessment of their risks and benefits)
- CDC will be updating their Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines; providers should monitor this website for more details and information about CDC’s recommendations (including information about allowing self-attestation of an person’s risk from COVID-19)
- CDC recommendation #4 (above) potentially allows booster doses for a large proportion of the working adult population. If a vaccine administration site’s capacity is limited, NH DPHS recommends prioritizing vaccination for the following populations:
  o People seeking their primary vaccination series, including people who are moderately and severely immunocompromised seeking a recommended 3rd dose of an mRNA vaccine as an extension of their primary series, per prior recommendations (see HAN Update #44); note this third dose is NOT considered a “booster” dose
  o Booster doses of the Pfizer vaccine for people 65 years of age and older, and those residing in long-term care facilities (CDC recommendation #1 above)
  o Booster doses for people aged 50-64 years of age with underlying medical conditions (CDC recommendation #2 above)
Supply of the Pfizer vaccine is not currently a limiting factor, and people can find vaccination locations (including sites offering a specific COVID-19 vaccine product) at www.vaccines.gov/search

Booster doses are not yet authorized or recommended for people that received the Moderna or J&J Janssen COVID-19 vaccines, but this is an area of recognized need and ongoing study

For public health purposes, people are still considered “fully vaccinated” when they are at least 14 days beyond receipt of their second dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, or 14 days beyond receipt of the single dose J&J Janssen vaccine

NH Department of Health & Human Service (NH DHHS) will review CDC’s formal guidance when more details are available, and continue to monitor access to vaccination to determine how best to support vaccination efforts

A CDC Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) webinar is scheduled this Tuesday September 28th from 2:00 - 3:00 pm and can be accessed online at: https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2021/callinfo_092821.asp

NH DPHS will discuss these updated recommendations on an ad-hoc Healthcare Provider and Public Health Partner webinar this Thursday 9/30, from 12:00 – 1:00 pm:
  - Zoom link: https://nh-dhhs.zoom.us/s/94059287404
  - Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656
  - Meeting ID: 940 5928 7404
  - Password: 353809

Background:
All COVID-19 vaccines retain high VE at preventing infection, hospitalizations, and deaths. A recent MMWR publication on vaccine effectiveness among multiple U.S. jurisdictions has shown that people who are NOT fully vaccinated are at a 5-fold higher risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection, 10-fold higher risk of hospitalization from COVID-19, and 11-fold higher risk of dying from COVID-19 compared to people who are fully vaccinated. Some studies, however, are showing that VE at preventing COVID-19 related hospitalizations may be lower amongst older adults compared to younger age groups (Scobie et al. MMWR; Grannis et al. MMWR; Bajema et al. MMWR), and a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine may increase VE and prevent hospitalizations and deaths (Bar-On et al. NEJM). Therefore, CDC and their Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine for certain persons (as outlined above) who received their primary vaccine series with the Pfizer vaccine.
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• For any questions regarding this notification, please call the NH DHHS, DPHS, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496 during business hours (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.).

• If you are calling after hours or on the weekend, please call the New Hampshire Hospital switchboard at (603) 271-5300 and request the Public Health Professional on-call.

• To change your contact information in the NH Health Alert Network, please send an email to DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov.

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