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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 a 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:
 - 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
 - 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)
 - 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/j/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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