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October 21, 2021

TO: Points of Dispensing participating in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program
FROM: Judith M. Persichilli, R.N., B.S.N., M.A. Commissioner
SUBJECT: Provision of Pfizer, Moderna, and Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Doses

Effective Thursday, October 21, Points of Dispensing (PODs) can begin administration of booster doses of all Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen).

Everyone 18 and older who received a Johnson & Johnson vaccine should receive a booster at least two months after their first dose.

Certain adults as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) who completed their initial vaccination series with Pfizer-BioNTech or with Moderna at least six months ago are eligible for a booster.

Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose.

On Wednesday, October 20, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued revised Emergency Use Authorizations (EUA). On Thursday, October 21, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) offered recommendations for certain populations to be eligible to receive a booster dose and the CDC offered final recommendations endorsing boosters for selected populations.

This memo serves to alert you to the amended use of the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines in New Jersey's COVID-19 vaccination effort. **Please share this information with appropriate staff in your program.**

Thank you for your partnership in this initiative. This memo supplements the other materials circulated by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) regarding the provision, delivery, and administration of COVID-19 vaccines. https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_vaccination.shtml. Points of Dispensing may contact the New Jersey Department of Health Vaccine Operations Center at Vax.Operations@doh.nj.gov with any further questions.

Eligible population

Effective immediately, the following populations are eligible to receive a booster dose:

- Certain adults who received a primary series with Pfizer-BioNTech and/or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at least six months ago:
 - People aged 65 years or older,
 - People aged 18 and older who live in long-term care settings,
 - People aged 18 and older with [underlying medical conditions](#), and
 - People aged 18 and older who work or live in high-risk settings.
- All adults (aged 18 years or older) who received one Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine at least two months ago.

All points of dispensing are advised to make booster doses available to those who self identify as eligible under the above criterion. Providers must accept self-reported eligibility from the vaccine recipient as sufficient and are not permitted to require individuals to present documentation or a note from a medical provider to demonstrate eligibility.

To establish the interval, if a person does not present with a vaccination record or the Docket app, providers can query the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIS).

Underlying medical conditions included in the mRNA booster authorizations are found at this CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>. As of October 21, 2021, this list includes:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic lung diseases, including asthma (moderate to severe), bronchiectasis, bronchopulmonary dysplasia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD, including emphysema and chronic bronchitis), damaged or scarred lung tissue such as interstitial lung disease (including idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis), cystic fibrosis, pulmonary embolism, and pulmonary hypertension
- Dementia or other neurological conditions
- Diabetes (type 1 or type 2)
- Down syndrome
- Heart conditions (such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies or hypertension)
- HIV infection
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system)
Note: People with moderately to severely compromised immune systems should receive an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine at least 28 days after the second dose.
- Mental health conditions (such as mood disorders including depression, and schizophrenia spectrum disorders)
- Overweight and obesity
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease or thalassemia
- Smoking, current or former
- Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant

- Stroke or cerebrovascular disease, which affects blood flow to the brain
- Substance use disorders (such as alcohol, opioid, and cocaine use disorders)
- Tuberculosis

Note: As we are learning more about COVID-19 every day, this list does not include all medical conditions that place a person at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Rare medical conditions, including many conditions that primarily affect children, may not be included in the above list. The list will be updated as the science evolves. A person with a condition that is not listed may still be at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19 than people of similar age who do not have the condition and should talk with their healthcare provider.

Nonexhaustive examples of occupational and institutional settings with potential increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission include those identified during New Jersey’s Phased Rollout of COVID-19 Vaccination. For example:

- First responders (e.g. healthcare workers, firefighters, police, congregate care staff)
- Education staff (e.g. teachers, support staff, daycare workers)
- Food and agriculture workers
- Manufacturing workers
- Corrections workers
- U.S. Postal Service workers
- Public transit workers
- Grocery store workers

Meanwhile, the following remain eligible:

- All persons ages 12 through 17 are eligible for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 two-dose series.
- All persons 18 and older are eligible for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna two-dose series, and for the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen one-dose vaccine.
- Persons who are moderately to severely immune compromised are eligible for an additional dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

Vaccine types

Federal authorizations and recommendations allow for mix and match (heterologous) dosing for booster shots. To offer choice at point of dispensing and while maintaining proper vaccine stewardship, sites are encouraged to carry as many types of COVID-19 vaccines as capable.

Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type that they originally received and others, may prefer to get a different booster. Vaccine recipients may make this individual self-assessment through their consideration of their own medical, occupational, or institutional risks; may weigh information in the EUA Fact Sheets for Recipients and Caregivers; may consult a healthcare provider; or may seek out other sources of guidance. Points of dispensing must not add barriers to access for anyone who presents at a vaccination site and self identifies as eligible.

PODs may use the currently available Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines for primary, second, additional doses for immunocompromised, and booster doses. Currently available Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine may be used for primary and booster doses.

- The booster Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine dose is the same product and dosage as the initial two-dose mRNA COVID-19 primary vaccine series.
- The booster Moderna vaccine dose is the same product and half the dosage as the initial two-dose mRNA COVID-19 primary vaccine series.
- The booster Johnson & Johnson/Janssen is the same product and dosage as the initial COVID-19 primary vaccine.

Administration timeline

Individuals who received a primary series of a mRNA (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) become eligible for booster vaccination at least six months after their second doses. Individuals who received a Johnson & Johnson/Janssen primary series become eligible for booster vaccination at least two months after their first doses. In addition, immunocompromised individuals who received two mRNA vaccines become eligible for an additional dose 28 days after their second doses.

Note: “Fully vaccinated” remains defined as at least two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine. This definition applies to all people, including those who receive an additional dose as recommended for moderate to severely immunocompromised people and those who receive a booster dose.

Co-administration

ACIP now recommends that COVID-19 and other vaccines (e.g., influenza vaccines, childhood vaccines) may be administered without regard to timing. This includes administration of COVID-19 and other vaccines on the same day, as well as co-administration within 14 days.

Scheduling

During the initial booster rollout, in addition to appointments, walk-ins should still be accommodated. This is especially important to ensure timely access without barriers for those who are unvaccinated, those newly eligible (e.g. just turned 12 years old), and those due for their second dose of an initial two-dose mRNA vaccine series. All appointment schedulers should be updated to account for booster dose needs and intervals. Points of dispensing must continue to be listed on the [New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub](#) and your POD must update NJDOH in a timely manner if any information on the state website is incomplete or out-of-date.

The New Jersey Vaccine Scheduling System (NJVSS) is currently enabled to schedule booster dose appointments for Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines. Booster dose scheduling for Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine is forthcoming. Booster doses of all three vaccines can be entered in NJVSS for walk-in recipients.

PODs must use recall and reminder methods to message eligibility for boosters to your Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccine recipients who received their second dose at least six months ago. PODs also must use recall and reminder methods to message eligibility for boosters to your Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine recipients who received their first dose at least two months ago.

Site Readiness

To accommodate as many eligible vaccine recipients as soon as possible, all active sites should prepare to have additional vaccines on hand at all vaccine events, provide night and weekend hours, accommodate walk-ins, update appointment availability reflected on the New Jersey Vaccine Appointment Finder (<https://covid19.nj.gov/finder>), and share information with NJDOH about pop-up vaccination clinics to be included in the COVID-19 Community Calendar (<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/communitycalendar>). Sites are also encouraged to actively promote the availability of booster doses. If additional vaccine supply is needed at a site, please be in touch with the New Jersey Department of Health to arrange for allocation and/or transfer.

To the extent possible while maintaining appropriate vaccine stewardship, all points of dispensing are expected to optimize use of all COVID-19 vaccines. No vaccination opportunity should be missed, so sites should request and carry sufficient inventory to vaccinate at capacity.

Reporting

The New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIS) has been upgraded to accept booster doses in vaccine recipients' records. All COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in New Jersey must be reported to NJIS. Doses reported to NJIS are available for display in the vaccine recipient's Docket app upon app refresh.

Federal recommendation

On Wednesday, October 20, the FDA issued revised EUAs with updated fact sheets. The Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers must be provided prior to vaccination.

- FDA statement: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-takes-additional-actions-use-booster-dose-covid-19-vaccines>
- For Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine:
 - Updated EUA: <https://www.fda.gov/media/150386/download>
 - Updated EUA Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144413/download>
 - Updated EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>
 - Translations of the Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine>
- For Moderna vaccine:
 - Updated EUA: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144636/download>
 - Updated EUA Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144637/download>
 - Updated EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download>
 - Translations of the Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/moderna-covid-19-vaccine>
- For Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine:
 - Updated EUA: <https://www.fda.gov/media/146303/download>
 - Updated EUA Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/146304/download>

- Updated EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers:
<https://www.fda.gov/media/146305/download>
- Translations of the Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers:
<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/janssen-covid-19-vaccine>

On Thursday, October 21, the CDC adopted recommendations for the booster dose.

- CDC statement: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p1021-covid-booster.html>

Provider education

Please ensure vaccination providers are trained and well versed in the updated vaccine information, provider fact sheet, and clinical considerations. We expect providers to be prepared to address questions from their patients and their families about the recommended booster dose. Information about COVID-19 vaccines and training materials is available through the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>. Please see CDC's Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html>

Consumer education

Points of dispensing play a critical role in building trust in vaccination. Please note CDC's dedicated webpage with information on the COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shot: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>
