PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
2022 – PAHAN –628 – 02 – 18 - UPD

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Update to Recommendations Regarding COVID-19 Vaccination

DATE:	2/18/2022
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Keara Klinepeter, Acting Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Update to Recommendations Regarding COVID-19 Vaccination
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	n/a
STREET ADDRESS:	n/a
COUNTY:	n/a
MUNICIPALITY:	n/a
ZIP CODE:	n/a

This transmission is a "Health Update," and provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL**; EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS**: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

SUMMARY

- Guidance released on February 11, 2022 from the CDC updates COVID-19 vaccination guidance.
- For immunocompromised individuals only, the interval between completion of the primary vaccine series and the booster dose has been shortened from 5 months to 3 months for mRNA vaccines and remains at 2 months for the Janssen vaccine.
- Moderate to Severely immunocompromised individuals ages 18 years and older who received a single dose of the Janssen vaccine should receive an additional dose an mRNA vaccine 28 days after the Janssen vaccine.
- It is no longer necessary to delay COVID-19 vaccination for those patients who have received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma for the treatment or prophylaxis of COVID-19.
- Patients who have received their full primary series outside the United States with a WHO approved COVID-19 vaccine may receive either of the 2 mRNA vaccines for their booster dose.
- The CDC has added to their guidance information regarding potential characteristics of allergic reactions, vasovagal reactions, and vaccine side effects following COVID-19 vaccination.

If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

Background

Vaccination with COVID-19 vaccines is one of the most important ways patients can prevent infection, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. The Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine received full FDA approval on August 23, 2021, the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine received full FDA approval on January 31, 2022 and the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine received an Emergency Use Authorization from the FDA on February 27, 2021. As more information is gathered over time about the effectiveness of these vaccines against COVID-19, guidance is updated to provide the maximum protection for patients. On February 11, 2022 the CDC updated its COVID-19 vaccine guidance to improve protection for certain patient populations from infection, serious illness, and death from COVID-19.

1. Guidance for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised Patients

Patients with moderately to severely immunocompromising conditions are at higher risk for morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19 and may not mount an adequate immune response to the traditional COVID-19 vaccine series. The following recommendations for this patient population should improve the protection and immune response for immunocompromised patients.

- The mRNA vaccines (Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna):
    - A **three dose primary series** is recommended for those aged 5 years and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised at the time of vaccination.
        - The same vaccine product should be used for all doses in the primary series.
        - Pfizer BioNTech vaccine (5 years and older):
            - The second dose is administered at least 21 days after the first dose and the third dose is administered at least 28 days after the second dose.
            - The full dose of 30mcg for ages 12 and up and 10mcg ages 5-12 should be given for all doses in the primary series.
        - Moderna vaccine (18 years and older):
            - The second dose in administered at least 28 days after the first and the third dose is administered at least 28 days after the second dose.
            - The full dose of 100mcg should be given for all doses in the primary series.
    - Moderately to severely immunocompromised patients ages 12 and older who received one of the mRNA vaccines as their primary series should receive a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine **3 months** after the completion of their primary series.
        - Booster doses have only been approved for ages 12 and older.
        - The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine (ages 12 and older) booster dose is 30mcg which is the same dose as the primary series.
        - The Moderna vaccine (ages 18 and older) booster dose is 50mcg which is half the dose of the primary series.

- The Johnson and Johnson (Janssen) vaccine:
    - A **two dose primary series** is recommended for patients aged 18 years and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised at the time of vaccination.
        - This two dose series consists of a dose of the Janssen vaccine followed at least 28 days later by a full dose of one of the mRNA vaccines.
    - These patients should then receive a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine at least **2 months** after the completion of their primary series.
        - The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine booster dose is 30mcg which is the same dose as the primary series.
        - The Moderna vaccine booster dose is 50mcg which is half the dose of the primary series.

COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule for Patients who are Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised

Primary vaccination	Age group	Number of primary vaccine doses	Number of booster doses	Interval between 1st and 2nd dose	Interval between 2nd and 3rd dose	Interval between 3rd and 4th dose
Pfizer-BioNTech	5–11 years	3	NA	3 weeks	≥4 weeks	N/A
Pfizer-BioNTech	≥12 years	3	1	3 weeks	≥4 weeks	≥3 months
Moderna	≥18 years	3	1	4 weeks	≥4 weeks	≥3 months
Janssen	≥18 years	1 Janssen, followed by 1 mRNA	1	4 weeks	≥2 months	N/A

2. Guidance for patients who have received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma for the treatment or prophylaxis of COVID-19.

- COVID-19 vaccination no longer needs to be delayed for patients who have received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma for the treatment or prophylaxis of COVID-19.
- Patients who have received a COVID-19 vaccine, the administration of tixagevimab/cilgavimab (Evushield) for pre-exposure prophylaxis still should be deferred for 2 weeks following COVID-19 vaccination.

3. Guidance on COVID-19 booster vaccine for patients who received their primary series outside of the United States

- Patients who received the full primary series of the FDA approved COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna, and Janssen) outside of the United States may proceed with a booster vaccine as if they had been vaccinated in the United States.
- Immunocompetent patients who received a full primary series of a WHO approved but non-FDA authorized vaccine, should receive a booster dose of **either of the 2 mRNA** vaccines (Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna) at least 5 months after the completion of their primary COVID-19 vaccine series.
- Moderately to severely immunocompromised patients who received a full primary series of a WHO approved but non-FDA authorized COVID-19 vaccine, should receive a booster dose of **either of the 2 mRNA vaccines** (Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna**) at least 3 months** after the completion of the primary COVID-19 vaccine series.
- In all of the above situations, the recommended dose of the mRNA booster vaccine is as follows:
  - The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine (ages 12 and older) booster dose is 30mcg.
  - The Moderna vaccine (ages 18 and older) booster dose is 50mcg.

4. Guidance on managing anaphylaxis post COVID-19 vaccination

- The CDC added information about characteristics of allergic reactions, vasovagal reactions and vaccine side effects following COVID-19 vaccination. This information is provided to assist providers with determining the etiology of post vaccination symptoms and whether a patient should proceed with future doses of COVID-19 vaccine.
- This information is presented in table form and is available here.
- All vaccine providers must report adverse reactions through the VAERS reporting system
- All vaccine recipients are encouraged to download and report on the V-safe app which was developed by the CDC to monitor COVID-19 vaccine adverse events.

If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

Categories of Health Alert messages:
Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of February 18, 2022 but may be modified in the future.