



## **BREAKING NEWS**

### **CDC: Healthcare Workers and At-Risk Populations May Receive Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Booster Doses**

**Sept. 24, 2021**

Early this morning, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that it is endorsing the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation for a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in some populations and recommended a booster dose for those in high-risk occupational and institutional settings.

Citing the Delta variant's dominance as the circulating strain and the rise of cases of COVID-19 nationwide, the CDC said "a booster shot will help strengthen protection against severe disease in those populations who are at high-risk for exposure to COVID-19 or the complications from severe disease."

The announcement followed the two-day meeting of the ACIP, which voted to recommend a single Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster dose for persons 65 years of age and older, long-term care facility residents, and persons 18 to 64 years of age with underlying medical conditions, based on individual benefit and risk, at least six months after the primary series under the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) emergency use authorization (EUA).

The recommendation by the CDC's advisory panel deviated from the FDA authorization and did not include healthcare workers at risk of occupational exposure.

"Alignment between the FDA's emergency use authorization and CDC's guidance is essential to allow the pharmacy workforce to operationalize the rollout of vaccine boosters," said Tom Kraus, ASHP's vice president of government relations. "CDC's decision is consistent with FDA's assessment of benefit and risk associated with booster doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. ASHP applauds the decision to make boosters available to pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and other healthcare providers who are at increased risk of exposure to SARS-

CoV-2 while they work every day to provide the best possible care to their patients during this pandemic.”

The CDC’s interim guidance, which applies only to those who received a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in their primary series, now states:

- People 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings **should** receive a booster shot at least 6 months after their primary series
- People aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions **should** receive a booster shot at least 6 months after their primary series
- People aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions **may** receive a booster shot at least 6 months after their primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks
- 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 shot at least 6 months after their primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks

With this decision, vaccine providers may now immediately begin offering boosters to those who meet these criteria.

Earlier this week, the FDA amended the EUA for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to allow for use of a single booster dose, to be administered at least six months after completion of the primary series in individuals 65 years of age and older, individuals 18 through 64 years of age at high risk of severe COVID-19, and individuals 18 through 64 years of age whose frequent institutional or occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2 puts them at high risk of serious complications of COVID-19 including severe COVID-19.

The CDC said Friday it will address recommendations for the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines as soon as data are available.

ASHP is interested in hearing how members are preparing for the rollout of COVID-19 vaccine booster doses. Please email us at [newscenter@ashp.org](mailto:newscenter@ashp.org) if you would like to share details on this important phase of the vaccine rollout.