



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

August 18, 2021

Dear Colleague:

Today we learned that booster doses of the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccines will be available for all U.S. adults beginning next month. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is actively planning for booster vaccine administration and asks that all Maryland healthcare providers also prepare. ([Federal release here](#))

Last Friday, August 13, 2021, CDC's independent Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems receive an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine following their initial 2-dose vaccination series. ACIP's recommendation follows the decision by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on August 12th to [amend Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine Emergency Use Authorizations \(EUAs\) in support of this allowance.](#)

Patients have been advised to talk to their healthcare providers to determine if they need an additional dose and what the timing of that dose should be. Providers should develop their own procedures to determine if patients are eligible. Please see the [CDC's website](#) for more information.

People who are recommended for an additional dose include those who have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

A [full list of conditions](#) can be found on CDC's website. The use of serologic testing to determine immune response is not recommended at this time. **The additional dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should be the same vaccine as the initial series and administered at least four weeks after completing a primary mRNA COVID-19**

vaccine series. While vaccination is likely to increase protection in this population, even after vaccination, people who are immunocompromised should continue to follow [current](#) prevention measures (including wearing [a mask](#), [staying 6 feet apart from others](#) they do not live with, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces) to protect themselves and those around them against COVID-19 until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.

All administered doses of COVID-19 vaccines must be reported to ImmuNet per the [CDC Provider Agreement](#) and within 24 hours per the [Maryland Department of Health's Amended Vaccination Matters Order \(attached\)](#). This requirement applies to all additional doses of mRNA vaccines administered to immunocompromised persons.

If you recommend that your patient receive an additional dose of an mRNA vaccine but you are not a COVID-19 vaccine provider, your patient can self-attest and receive the additional dose wherever vaccines are offered. This will help ensure there are no additional barriers to access for this vulnerable population receiving a needed additional dose. As we receive additional updates, MDH will continue to provide information regarding vaccine administration to immunocompromised individuals to local health departments, pharmacies, health centers, and all vaccine providers.

Please be aware that CDC does **not** recommend additional doses for any other population at this time. Additionally, this amendment only applies to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines and **does not apply** to the J&J/Janssen vaccine. Vaccine providers should continue to administer COVID-19 vaccine in accordance with the [updated EUAs](#) per the [COVID-19 vaccine provider agreement](#).

Below is a list of resources related to the recommendation:

- [Updated Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States](#)
- New [web page](#) for consumers
- New [web page](#) for healthcare providers
- Updated [Pfizer EUA Fact Sheet for HCPs](#)
- Updated [Pfizer EUA Fact Sheet for Vaccine Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- Updated [Moderna EUA Facts Sheet for HCPs](#)
- Updated [Moderna EUA Fact Sheet for Vaccine Recipients and Caregivers](#)

Thank you for everything that you have done and are continuing to do to ensure all Marylanders have access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Sincerely,



Jinlene Chan, MD, MPH, FAAP
Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services