

# JCVI issues advice on COVID-19 booster vaccines for those aged 18 to 39 years and a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose for 12-15-year-olds

Following the emergence of the Omicron variant, including confirmed cases in the UK, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has urgently reviewed vaccine response measures.

JCVI now advises:

- All adults aged 18 to 39 years should be offered a booster dose, in order of descending age groups, to increase their levels of protection.
- Booster doses should be given no sooner than three months after the primary course.
- All severely immunosuppressed individuals should be offered their booster dose no sooner than three months after completing their primary course of 3 doses.
- Young people aged 12 to 15 years should receive a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose.

JCVI previously advised that those aged over 40 years and those at higher risk from COVID-19 should be offered a booster. This new JCVI advice means those aged 18-39 will also be eligible for a booster when the NHS calls them forward.

The booster will be offered in order of descending age groups, with priority given to the vaccination of older adults and those in a COVID-19 at-risk group. In response to the changing risk posed by the Omicron variant, the booster will now be given no sooner than 3 months after the primary course.

In addition, a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (30 mcgs) for young people aged 12 to 15 years is advised no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose.

The overall intention of the measures advised above is to accelerate the deployment of COVID-19 vaccines and raise levels of protection across the population.

**Professor Wei Shen Lim, Chair, COVID-19 immunisation, JCVI said:** “Having a booster dose of the vaccine will help to increase our level of protection against the Omicron variant. This is an important way for us to reduce the impact of this variant on our lives, especially in the coming months.

“If you are eligible for a booster, please take up the offer and keep yourself protected as we head into winter.”

Both the Moderna (50 microgram) and Pfizer-BioNTech (30 microgram) vaccines have been shown to substantially increase antibody levels when offered as a booster dose and should be used with equal preference in the COVID-19 booster programme.

Continued efforts will be made to offer COVID-19 vaccination (first, second and booster doses) to adults who have yet to receive any COVID-19 vaccinations.

JCVI will continue to review the programme and consider further evidence to ensure that health benefits are maximised alongside the rapidly evolving data on the Omicron variant.

**Dr June Raine, MHRA Chief Executive said:**

“The public can be confident that our robust regulatory assessment supports the JCVI’s recommended extension to the vaccination campaign. This further strengthens our ability to ensure people are protected against COVID-19 and saves lives.

“Our safety monitoring to date shows that COVID-19 vaccines continue to be safe and effective for the vast majority of people. The vast majority of reactions which are reported relate to expected side effects such as injection site reactions and flu-like symptoms, as was seen in our initial assessment. Our proactive monitoring of the safety of booster doses does not raise any new concerns.

“We have continued to carefully scrutinise all the data we have available to us and our robust surveillance programme includes monitoring all suspected reactions for young people and adolescents as well as adults. We ensure all suspected reports are carefully followed up. When you are called for your booster dose, you can come forward confident that the benefits in preventing serious COVID-19 far outweigh any risks.”

**ENDS**



**Kelly North** (she/her)

**Senior External Affairs Manager**

39 Victoria Street, Westminster, SW1H 0EU

E: [kelly.north@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:kelly.north@dhsc.gov.uk) T: 0207 972 1001 M: 07544 378108

W: [www.gov.uk/dh](http://www.gov.uk/dh) @DHSCgovuk

*External Affairs Team inbox:* [DHSCExternalAffairs@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:DHSCExternalAffairs@dhsc.gov.uk)