

CDC Strengthens Recommendations and Expands Eligibility for COVID-19 Booster Shots

Media Statement

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Following today's meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP), CDC is expanding eligibility of COVID-19 vaccine booster doses to everyone 5 years of age and older. CDC now recommends that children ages 5 through 11 years should receive a booster shot 5 months after their initial Pfizer-BioNTech vaccination series. Since the pandemic began, more than 4.8 million children ages 5 through 11 have been diagnosed with COVID-19, 15,000 have been hospitalized and, tragically, over 180 have died. As cases increase across the country, a booster dose will safely help restore and enhance protection against severe disease.

In addition, today CDC is strengthening its recommendation that those 12 and older who are immunocompromised and those 50 and older should receive a second booster dose at least 4 months after their first. Over the past month we have seen steady increases in cases, with a steep and substantial increase in hospitalizations for older Americans. While older Americans have the highest coverage of any age group of first booster doses, most older Americans received their last dose (either their primary series or their first booster dose) many months ago, leaving many who are vulnerable without the protection they may need to prevent severe disease, hospitalization, and death.

Whether it is your first booster, or your second, if you haven't had a vaccine dose since the beginning of December 2021 and you are eligible, now is the time to get one.

The following is attributable to CDC Director, Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky

"Today, I endorsed ACIP's vote to expand eligibility for COVID-19 vaccine booster doses. Children 5 through 11 should receive a booster dose at least 5 months after their primary series. Vaccination with a primary series among this age group has lagged behind other age groups leaving them vulnerable to serious illness. With over 18 million doses administered in this age group, we know that these vaccines are safe, and we must continue to increase the number of children who are protected. I encourage parents to keep their children up to date with CDC's COVID-19 vaccine recommendations.

With cases increasing, it is important that all people have the protection they need, which is why, today, CDC has also strengthened another booster recommendation. Those 50 and older and those who are 12 and older and immunocompromised should get a second booster dose."

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