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**Sent:** Monday, December 20, 2021 2:22 PM

**Subject:** COVID-19 Vaccine Program (CoVP) Provider Bulletin, Week of December 20



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Dear Connecticut COVID-19 Vaccine Providers,

*This communication is being sent to all key contacts at provider organizations administering COVID-19 vaccine— please read this message in its entirety. Please feel free to share it with others in your organization who may benefit from the update. Note that all of our communications are archived on our [web site](#).*

With the Omicron variant spreading and the holidays right around the corner, we want to encourage everyone eligible across Connecticut to receive a COVID-19 booster before the end of the year. Here are some things you can do to support vaccination in our state:

- **Please make sure you report your inventory every day, and that your clinic listings remain up to date on [Vaccines.gov](#). If you accept “all comers”, confirm that you are listed as a public site so that your clinic is searchable on the site by the public.**
- Please support our outreach efforts – reach out to your patients and communities! The Public Health Communications Collaborative’s Updated toolkit on [COVID-19 Booster Dose Messaging and Outreach Tools may be helpful in these endeavors](#).
- If you are able, please increase your capacity to provide vaccines, by hosting additional clinics, engaging vaccinators, etc., and reach out to the Immunization Program if there’s anything we can do to help!
- Remember if you want to refer patients out for COVID-19 vaccination, information is on our web site [here](#).
- **If you have COVID-19 information posted on your websites, please make sure it is up to date with all of the latest recommendations.** Along with that, please be sure your scheduled clinics and any other general COVID-19 information also remains up to date.

### UPDATES

#### **ACIP recommends mRNA COVID-19 vaccines preferred over the J&J Janssen**

The [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\) met December 16 to discuss and vote on updated recommendations for the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine](#). The members heard presentations about thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS), COVID-19 vaccine safety surveillance in children 5 through 11 years of age, and the Omicron variant. The presentations included an update to the benefit and risk assessment in the [Evidence to Recommendations Frameworks](#) for the Janssen COVID-19 vaccines. The TTS case reporting

rate following Janssen COVID-19 vaccination is higher than previous estimates in a wide range of ages for both men and women. Recent investigations have provided additional evidence for a relationship between Janssen COVID-19 vaccination and TTS and associated severe outcomes.

### Updated Recommendation

The ACIP recommended that mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are preferred over the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19 for persons  $\geq 18$  years of age.

### CDC endorses ACIP's updated COVID-19 vaccine recommendations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has endorsed the ACIP's updated COVID-19 vaccine recommendations. Given the current state of the pandemic both here and around the world, the ACIP reaffirmed that receiving any vaccine is better than being unvaccinated. Individuals who are unable or unwilling to receive an mRNA vaccine will continue to have access to Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine. For full statement click [here](#).

**[Pfizer announced on Friday 12/17](#) that trials of their COVID-19 vaccine in children ages 2 to 5 did not provide the expected immunity in kids this age.** Pfizer will now evaluate a third dose for children 6 months to under 5 years as part of the primary series. This will push launch to April or later.

### Christmas and New Year Holiday Deliveries

Orders for this week should be placed in the [ordering portal](#) by noon tomorrow. Holiday redistributions will be limited, and providers are expected to manage inventory appropriately.

- No orders will be delivered Thursday, December 23 through Monday, December 27.
- No orders will be delivered Thursday, December 30 through Tuesday, January 4.

Please plan to have additional inventory on-hand prior to the holidays to prevent any supply shortages caused by shipping delays.

### Expiration Extension

FDA has approved a shelf-life extension for the Pfizer Pediatric vaccine (Orange cap, 5-11 YO, diluent required) and the soon to be available Adol/Adult Tris (Gray Cap, age 12+, no diluent). This approval may be found at [Healthcare Providers for 5-11 years of age, orange cap \(must dilute\) \(fda.gov\)](#); [Healthcare Providers for 12 years of age and older, gray cap \(no dilution\) \(fda.gov\)](#) ) and takes effect immediately. **This extension applies to frozen (ULT) inventories only.**

Printed Manufacturing Date	9-Month Expiry Date*
06/2021	Feb. 28, 2022
07/2021	Mar. 31, 2022
08/2021	Apr. 30, 2022
09/2021	May 31, 2022

10/2021	Jun. 30, 2022
11/2021	July. 31, 2022
12/2021	Aug. 31, 2022
01/2022	Sept. 30, 2022
02/2022	Oct. 31, 2022

\*Date of expiration always falls on the last day of the month

### Call Center Update

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, the 211/United Way call center will redirect for COVID-19 vaccination calls. The 211 Call Center recording prompt will state the following: “the best place to find up to date Connecticut COVID-19 information and a COVID-19 vaccine clinic is at [ct.gov/covidvaccine](https://ct.gov/covidvaccine). If you are unable to access online information, please check with your healthcare provider, local pharmacies, or contact the Connecticut Department of Public Health Immunization Program at 860-509-7929 during business hours.”

**Action item: If your clinic or Local Health Department website lists the 211 webpage or call center for COVID-19 vaccination clinics or questions, please update it to [ct.gov/covidvaccine](https://ct.gov/covidvaccine).**

### CT WiZ Update – SMART Health Card

The COVID-19 vaccination record SMART Health Card / QR code is available in the CT WiZ Immunization Information System (IIS) and the [CT WiZ Public Portal](#).

- Recipients can access their own records by using the CT WiZ [Public Portal](#). For security, this public portal uses ‘two-factor authentication’ to verify identify.
- If recipients require support with accessing their vaccination record, they can complete the [online request form](#) or call our Immunization Program phone 860-509-7929 during business hours.

**For FAQs, visit:** [CT WiZ Access My Immunization Record](#). This webpage has been updated with new FAQs about the SMART Health Card.

**Tip for Clinics:** Ensuring your recipient’s contact information is current at each visit (**such as cell phone and email**) will be helpful to enable recipients to access their own (or their minor child’s) record in the CT WiZ Public Portal.

### How to update your information in Vaccine Finder/Vaccines.gov

COVID-19 vaccine inventory counts must be reported to Vaccine Finder daily (*required*). **This is required, regardless of whether your clinic is set as publicly displaying or private.**

- If you need to make updates to your primary point of contact for Vaccine Finder:
  - Please update [CT WiZ](#) under: Clinic Tools – Clinic Information – Staff. Include a note in the ‘comments field’ of the update stating

this is for a new point of contact for Vaccine Finder. [Click here](#) for the CT WiZ training.

- Once completed, a registration link will be sent to the new contact from the CDC. If you do not receive this link, please email [CARS\\_HelpDesk@cdc.gov](mailto:CARS_HelpDesk@cdc.gov) to request they resend the registration link.
- When the primary vaccine coordinator creates their initial account in Vaccine Finder, they will be asked if they would like to report inventory: for 'all clinics' under their organization or to report 'clinics individually.'
  - If you select the option to report for 'all clinics' under your organization, only your primary vaccine coordinator contact will receive a registration link.
  - If you select the option to report 'individually', your back-up vaccine coordinator will also receive a registration link.

If you choose to publicly display your clinic on Vaccines.gov (*optional*), **please note that the shipping address listed in CT WiZ is what will be displayed on Vaccines.gov** as your clinic location. [Click here](#) for training on how to publicly display your clinic on Vaccines.gov.

#### **New and updated resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

- [COVID-19 Science Update released: December 17, 2021 Edition 117](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccines That Require 2 Shots](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs for Healthcare Professionals](#)
- [Pfizer-BioNTech \(COMIRNATY\) COVID-19 Vaccine Questions](#)
- [Selected Adverse Events Reported after COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Approved or Authorized in the United States](#)

#### **REMINDERS**

*We are keeping information on many important reminders from past communications in the space below. To prevent this section from becoming too lengthy, what remains is selected carefully. All past communications are available [here](#).*

#### **Transition to new Adult Pfizer Tris-Sucrose Formulation**

CDC is transitioning to a new Pfizer adolescent/adult formulation beginning mid-December (click [here](#) for side by side comparison). The new formulation:

- **Does not require diluent** for mixing at administration sites;
- May be stored at 2-8°C (36-46°F) for up to 10-weeks;
- **Should never be stored at standard freezer temperatures;**
- Direct shipped vaccine from Pfizer will have a **minimum dose order of 300;**

- Can be used on **individuals 12 years of age and older**; and
- The vials will have a **gray cap**;
- Provider sites utilizing the Pfizer thermal shipping containers for temporary storage must prepare for use of an ULT freezer -or- refrigerator moving forward; these shipping containers cannot be utilized to store the Pfizer Tris-Adult formulation.
- As required by CDC, Connecticut will distribute all existing PBS formulations (1170 and 450 dose packs) to providers prior to distributing the new Tris Sucrose Adult formulation.
- In order to avoid mistakes during this period of transition when both products may be in circulation, these products should not be offered/administered at the same time (same clinic).

**Pfizer Product Overview:**

<b>NDC Number</b>	<b>Product Name</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Configuration</b>	<b>Notes</b>
59267-1000-02	Pfizer Covid Vaccine 195 vial tray	PBS 1170 (Purple Cap)	6 dose vial, diluent required	start closing out Dec.
59267-1000-03	Pfizer Covid Vaccine 25 vial carton (s)	PBS 450 (Purple Cap)	6 dose vial, diluent required	limited supply, closing out
59267-1025-04	Pfizer Covid Vaccine 10ct Adult	Adult Tris (Gray Cap)	6 dose vial, no diluent	start distribution end of Dec.
59267-1055-04	Pfizer Covid Vaccine 10ct Pediatric 10 mcg	Pediatric (Orange Cap)	10 dose vial, diluent required	Continuing for age 5-11 YO

**Updated recommendations for people vaccinated outside of the United States and people who received COVID-19 vaccine as part of a clinical trial**

On Wednesday, CDC issued Emergency Use Instructions (EUI) and updated its [clinical considerations](#) to allow the COVID-19 vaccine by Pfizer-BioNTech to be given as an additional primary dose or booster dose to certain people who completed a vaccine primary series with certain COVID-19 vaccines that are not authorized or approved by the FDA. This ensures that eligible people who were vaccinated outside of the U.S. with these vaccines, or who received certain non-FDA authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccines through participation in some clinical trials, can get an additional primary dose or booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

**Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Expiration Date Extension and New Lot Numbers**

FDA authorized an extension of the shelf life for 78 new lots of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. REMEMBER: vials must be maintained in the frozen state for the extension to be applicable (extension does not apply to thawed vials)

- Look up expiration date by scanning QR code located on the carton or use the company's [expiration date lookup feature](#) on its website.

- Visit [CDC's Vaccine Lot Number and Expiration Date](#) webpage and complete the registration form to request access or contact [IIInfo@cdc.gov](mailto:IIInfo@cdc.gov).

### Report a problem with ancillary kits

If there are any issues identified with your ancillary kits, please call McKesson to report the issue and request a new kit:

McKesson Specialty Phone #: (833) 343 2703 Email: [COVIDVaccineSupport@McKesson.com](mailto:COVIDVaccineSupport@McKesson.com)

### Pfizer 6hr Label Correction

Labels on the Pfizer Pediatric (orange) vials were printed in the months prior to amendment of the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In anticipation of approval, the labels were printed, "Discard 6 hours after dilution." However, the FDA approved the vaccine for discarding 12 hours after dilution. This updated information is printed in the EUA and Fact Sheets as follows:

*"After dilution, the vial should be held between 2°C to 25°C (35°F to 77°F). Vials should be discarded 12 hours after dilution. Vial labels and cartons may state that a vial should be discarded 6 hours after the first puncture. The information in this Fact Sheet supersedes the number of hours printed on vial labels and cartons."*

We anticipate the label will eventually be updated, but please be aware that ALL Pfizer pediatric vaccine should be discarded 12 hours after dilution. Please make sure your staff are aware of this change to the Pfizer pediatric label.

### Resources from the CDC

- [COVID-19 Pfizer Pediatric Tris-sucrose Vaccine EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients](#)
- [COVID-19 Science Brief: Infection vs Vaccine Induced Immunity](#)
- [New CDC Study: Vaccination Offers Higher Protection than Previous COVID-19 Infection](#)
- [Families with Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Members](#)
- [Workplace Vaccination Program](#)
- [Enroll Your Dependent in v-safe](#)
- [Product Information Guide for COVID-19 Vaccines and Ancillary Kits/Associated Products\(11/3\)](#)
- [The Ancillary Redistribution Gadget for Healthcare \(ARGH\) Tool](#) a tool to assist providers redistributing vaccines to other CoVP clinics to identify the number of ancillary kit items needed to pack based on the number of requested doses (11/4)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness Research](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccines for People with Disabilities](#)
- [Vaccine Administration Resource Library | CDC](#) Includes information Vaccine administration e-learn with CE for pharmacists, infographics for identifying injection sites, short video demonstration injection and holding children.
- [Pinkbook: Vaccine Administration | CDC](#) includes strategies to decrease anxiety and procedural pain.
- Clinical Considerations: Vaccinating Adolescents at [COVID-19 Vaccine Webinar Series | CDC](#). There will be a similar one for younger children posted soon.

- COVID-19 clinical materials, including product-specific trainings, guidance and infographics, are here: [COVID-19 Vaccination Clinical and Professional Resources | CDC](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [booster shot webpage](#) for the public
- COCA Call: [Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccines: CDC's Recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Primary Series in Children 5–11 years old](#) (recording now available)
- COCA Call: [What Clinicians Need to Know about the Recent Updates to CDC's Recommendations for COVID-19 Boosters](#) (recording now available)
- [Different COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#)

### Moderna Wastage Reporting in CT WiZ (simplified)

Wastage should be calculated based on the number of people vaccinated. The information below is for a 10 dose vial, but the same logic holds for a 14 dose vial:

#### If 10 or fewer people are vaccinated:

- Calculate wastage as 10 minus the number of people vaccinated, regardless of whether the individuals were vaccinated with primary or booster doses.
- For instance, if 10 people are given booster doses, this would be considered 0 wastage.
- Similarly, if 5 people are given primary doses and 5 people are given booster doses, this is 0 wastage.

**If 8 people are vaccinated**, all with primary doses, this is 2 doses wasted. If 8 people are vaccinated, 4 with primary doses and 4 with booster doses, this is also 2 doses wasted.

#### If >10 people are vaccinated:

- Because the half dose booster allows for up to 20 doses to be drawn from a vial, you will need add in extra whole doses to increase your inventory on-hand to account for the extra doses administered. This will always be considered 0 wastage.

### Moderna Inventory and Booster Adjustments in CT WiZ

Your inventory on-hand will need to be adjusted per vial based on how many additional doses were administered. Vaccine wastage will need to be made per vial. Wastage is reported in whole doses.

- **How to make an inventory adjustment in CT WiZ:**
  - In CT WiZ, select Inventory – Vaccines – On-Hand – select Actions – select Adjustment:
    - select the **Reason code: Dose Count Variance Multi-Dose Vial** and
    - enter the **Doses Adjusted** (*as whole doses.*)
  - **For User Interface: How to document correct booster dosage administered in CT WiZ:**
    - In CT WiZ, find the patient – select Action – Add Vaccine – Create And Administer – Change **Dosage field to 25**

- **For EHR vendors and senders: please be sure to include the correct dosage volume** (primary 0.5mL or add in the booster 0.25 mL) for Moderna in the HL7 message to be reported from your Electronic Health Record (EHR) system to CT WiZ.

## **Vaccine Lot Management and Expiration\_**

In order to minimize the number of unused expired doses and manage expired doses correctly, we encourage providers to:

- Monitor expiration dates weekly, rotate stock as needed, and follow a “first in, first out” strategy to manage inventory.
- If nearing expiration, check posted manufacturer information for the most up to date expiration/extension information for vaccine lots.
- Based on the latest expiration information and unless instructed to do otherwise, REMOVE expired vaccine from the storage unit. Do not give staff opportunity to administer expired vaccine.
  - If expired vaccine is inadvertently is administered, it is considered a vaccine administration error and requires remediation including a VAERS report, contacting the recipient to inform them of the error, and may or may not require revaccination based on the manufacturers’ guidance. Guidance on vaccine administration errors can be found in Appendix A of the [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States](#).
- Vaccine disposal: dispose of the vaccine vial (with any remaining vaccine) and packaging as medical waste. Do NOT return vaccine in the thermal shipping container.
- Check your vaccine stock for lots expiring using the [CDC’s Vaccine Lot Number and Expiration Date webpage](#).
- Request access to a new COVID-19 Vaccine Lot Number report via CDC’s Vaccine Code Set Management Service (VCSMS). This report includes COVID-19 vaccine lot numbers and expiration dates provided to CDC by the vaccine manufacturers. This report is updated daily and can be used to support vaccine administration, inventory management, and jurisdiction IISs. Complete the registration form on [CDC’s Vaccine Lot Number and Expiration Date webpage](#) to request access to the report.

Providers should dispose of expired vaccine appropriately and report the wastage in the DPH ticketing system. When reporting expired doses to the [Helpdesk](#), please select the “Report Vaccine Wastage” ticket option, then select “Other” as the wastage reason and type “Expiration” in the text box when prompted. Please make sure that inventory is updated in Vaccine Finder, VAMS, or CT WiZ as appropriate.

**Report vaccine temperature excursions and vaccines wasted to the [Helpdesk](#)** by following the prompts and submitting a ticket.

**Communicating the Benefits of Influenza Vaccine during COVID-19** Please see new handout which includes updated recommendations on co-administration of flu and COVID-19 vaccines and tips for discussing flu vaccine with patients. Check it out [here](#).



## Influenza Corner

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices *Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, United States, 2021–22 Influenza Season* is available [here](#).

If a patient is eligible, both the flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same visit, [as recommended by CDC and its Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices \(ACIP\)](#).

In addition to flu vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine can be given with other vaccines as well. Even though both vaccines can be given at the same visit, providers should follow the recommended schedule for either vaccine: If your patients haven't gotten the currently recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccine, they should get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible, and ideally they should get a flu vaccine by the end of October.

Giving all vaccines for which a person is eligible at the same visit is considered a [best practice](#) as it increases the probability people will be up to date on recommended vaccines. It also is an important part of immunization practice, especially if a health care provider is uncertain that a patient will return for additional doses of vaccine.

### Coadministration of COVID-19 and Influenza vaccines

You may administer COVID-19 and influenza vaccines without regard to timing (both live, attenuated and non-live influenza vaccines). This includes administration of COVID-19 and influenza vaccines on the same day, as well as coadministration at any time interval. ([CDC | Interim Clinical Considerations: Coadministration of COVID-19 and Influenza vaccines](#))

### Ensure Best Practice by Checking CT WiZ Before Vaccinating

Prior to administering any vaccine, including the COVID-19 vaccine, it is important that a recipient's prior vaccine history be referenced in the Immunization Information System (CT WiZ); best clinical practice is to verify that the recommended interval has elapsed since a previous dose of vaccine and that the preferred brand of vaccine be administered.

- If your clinic established bi-directional data exchange, you can query CT WiZ for the patient immunization record [electronically from your EHR](#).
- Every CoVP enrolled clinic can [look up the patient immunization record](#) in the [CT WiZ user interface](#). Those who signed the CoVP Provider Agreement and the primary and back-up vaccine coordinator already have CT WiZ access.
- If your staff need access to CT WiZ, [request a username](#) and select the 'Clinic Access' role. Access to CT WiZ is defined in [EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 13C](#).
- If you need support, please submit a [Helpdesk ticket](#).

### Post Notice to Patients About Reporting to CT WiZ at CoVP Clinics

All clinics enrolled in the CoVP must post the [Notice to Patients About Reporting to CT WiZ](#), to let vaccine recipients know their records are being reported to CT WiZ. If you are reporting through VAMS, this data is transmitted to CT WiZ.

## Replacement CDC COVID Vaccination Cards

- *Recommendation:* Post your procedure for recipients to request replacement cards, in a location visible to recipients at your clinic as well as on your website. If your clinic needs additional CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Cards, contact [Immunizations@ct.gov](mailto:Immunizations@ct.gov) and we will email you a pdf of the card for your clinic to print (*note: these should not be posted on your website*). Large type print cards are also available via pdf.
- *Reminder:* DPH cannot issue a CDC card to recipients. DPH can provide the immunization record from CT WiZ [upon request](#) or recipients can access their own record in the [CT WiZ Public Portal](#).

## Upcoming Clinic Trainings and Office Hours

- **CoVP Update -- next meeting January 5**  
Provides CoVP Vaccinating Providers updates on the CoVP Program and Q&A with DPH staff. **Every other Wednesday** 9:00am-10:00am; Join: [CoVP Office Hours](#)
- **The CoVP Enrollment Office Hours** Provides information about the CoVP enrollment process in CT WiZ and Q&A with DPH staff. **Mondays** 12:00pm-12:30pm; Join: [CoVP CT WiZ Enrollment Office Hours](#)
- **Vaccine Storage and Handling Assessment** For clinics who completed CoVP enrollment and received an invite to attend. **Tuesdays** 10:00am-11:00am & **Thursdays** 1:00pm-2:00pm; **By invitation Only**
- **VAMS & CT WiZ Live Helpdesk Office Hours** Clinics can ask questions about VAMS and CT WiZ functionality to DPH staff. **Tuesdays** 9:00am-10:00am; Join: [VAMS Live Helpdesk Office Hours](#)

Visit: [VAMS Training](#) and [CT WiZ Training](#) for enhancement release notes and training.

Thank you for all of your ongoing work and support of our COVID-19 vaccine roll-out in Connecticut.

CT DPH Immunization Program Main P: (860) 509-7929 | Fax: (860) 706-5429 | Email: [dph.immunizations@ct.gov](mailto:dph.immunizations@ct.gov) Website: [CT Immunization Program](#) | [COVID-19 Vaccine Program](#)

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