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**Sent:** Monday, September 20, 2021 3:12 PM

**Subject:** COVID-19 Vaccine Program (CoVP) Provider Bulletin, Week of September 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](#).*

## **UPDATES**

### **COVID-19 Booster doses**

On September 17, 2021, the Food and Drug Administration Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) voted unanimously for authorization of a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for individuals 65 years of age and older and 16 years of age and older at high risk for serious illness from COVID-19 or being exposed to the virus. The FDA must either accept or modify the VRBPAC recommendations and adjust the existing Pfizer emergency use authorization accordingly. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) meets next Wednesday and Thursday to outline the parameters for the booster's administration and define who qualifies as "high risk." That could include individuals with underlying health conditions, such as obesity, and groups such as healthcare workers exposed to Covid-19 during the course of their jobs.

You can watch the ACIP meetings live at [this link](#) on Sept. 22, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern and Sept. 23, 2021, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. EST.

As has been the case throughout the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out, DPH advises that any implementation of booster programs should begin only after FDA takes a regulatory action and ACIP and CDC make clinical recommendations for COVID-19 vaccine use. Administration of third doses of mRNA vaccines for the immune compromised should continue as planned; booster dose administration should wait until after ACIP meets.

### **Vaccine Expiration**

Some CoVP providers have J&J doses that have recently or are soon to expire. CDC has indicated that the expiration for these doses will not be extended again. Providers should dispose of expired vaccine appropriately and report the wastage in the DPH ticketing system. When reporting wasted 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.

This is a good time for providers to follow the best practices of regularly checking inventory for expired vaccine and removing expired inventory to prevent it from being administered. If you have not yet registered for the report, visit [CDC's Vaccine Lot Number and Expiration Date webpage](#) and complete the registration form to request access. Moderna and J&J also have expiration date look up websites.

### **Influenza Corner**

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](#))

With influenza season approaching, there may be compelling logistical advantages to offering patients COVID-19 and influenza vaccines on the same day, and you may encourage patients to receive these on the same day. There are no safety concerns for coadministration.

Best practices for [administering more than one vaccine](#), including COVID-19 vaccines and influenza vaccines, include:

- When preparing more than one vaccine, label each with the name and dosage (amount) of vaccine, lot number, the initials of the preparer, and the exact beyond-use time, if applicable.

- Always inject vaccines into different injection sites.
  - Separate injection sites by 1 inch or more, if possible so that any local reactions can be differentiated.
  - Each muscle (deltoid, vastus lateralis) has multiple injection sites (Vaccine Administration Route and Site).
- If administered at the same time, COVID-19 vaccines and vaccines that might be more likely to cause a local injection site reaction (for example, [high-dose and adjuvanted inactivated influenza vaccines](#)) should be administered in different limbs, if possible ([Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)—United States, 2021-22](#)).
- Inject vaccines rapidly without aspiration since aspiration is not recommended before administering a vaccine (Vaccine Administration Route and Site).
- There are many existing resources on administration and co-administration of vaccines relevant for healthcare providers, including:
  - [Pink Book: Vaccine Administration | CDC](#)
  - [You Call The Shots: Vaccinating Adolescents](#) (cdc.gov)
  - [Vaccine Administration Training Module](#) (cdc.gov)
  - [Intramuscular \(IM\) Injection: Sites](#) - YouTube
  - CDC also is developing a job aid and video for health care professionals on coadministration of vaccines.

The following are reminders about important influenza-related events coming up. Put these dates on your calendar to keep up with flu over the course of the 2021-2022 influenza season.

- September 9 (recording will be available): [Webinar September 9, 2021 - 2021-2022 Influenza Vaccination Recommendations and Guidance on Coadministration with COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- October 7: [National Foundation for Infectious Disease press conference launch](#)
- October 7: 2021-2022 Recommendations for Influenza Prevention and Treatment in Children: An Update for Pediatric Providers (we will share link once available)
- October 12: [Ad Council campaign](#) launch
- October 15: [Weekly FluView Reports](#) for 2021-2022 begin

### **Recent updates to Communication and Education Materials**

- [Developing COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [Selected Adverse Events Reported after COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Breakthrough Case Investigation and Reporting](#)

- [12 COVID-19 Vaccination Strategies for Your Community](#)
- [U.S. COVID-19 Vaccine Product Information | CDC](#) Download a **Prevaccination Screening Form** in multiple languages (NEWLY translated form in Dari and Pashto for Afghan arrivals.)

### **Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination – September 15, 2021**

This updated science brief synthesizes the scientific evidence supporting CDC’s guidance for fully vaccinated people and will continue to be updated as more information becomes available.

Key points:

- All COVID-19 vaccines currently approved or authorized in the United States (Pfizer-BioNTech/Comirnaty, Moderna, and Janssen [Johnson & Johnson]) are effective against COVID-19, including against severe disease, hospitalization, and death.
- Available evidence suggests the currently approved or authorized COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against hospitalization and death for a variety of strains, including Alpha (B.1.1.7), Beta (B.1.351), Gamma (P.1), and Delta (B.1.617.2); data suggest lower effectiveness against confirmed infection and symptomatic disease caused by the Beta, Gamma, and Delta variants compared with the ancestral strain and Alpha variant. Ongoing monitoring of vaccine effectiveness against variants is needed.
- Limited available data suggest lower vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 illness and hospitalization among immunocompromised people. In addition, numerous studies have shown reduced immunologic response to COVID-19 vaccination among people with various immunocompromising conditions.
- The risk for SARS-CoV-2 infection in fully vaccinated people cannot be completely eliminated as long as there is continued community transmission of the virus. Early data suggest infections in fully vaccinated persons are more commonly observed with the Delta variant than with other SARS-CoV-2 variants. However, data show fully vaccinated persons are less likely than unvaccinated persons to acquire SARS-CoV-2, and infections with the Delta variant in fully vaccinated persons are associated with less severe clinical outcomes. Infections with the Delta variant in vaccinated persons potentially have reduced transmissibility than infections in unvaccinated persons, although additional studies are needed.

### **Recent COVID-19 and vaccine related publications**

- [Comparative Effectiveness of Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, and Janssen \(Johnson & Johnson\) Vaccines in Preventing COVID-19 Hospitalizations Among Adults Without Immunocompromising Conditions — United States, March–August 2021](#)

### **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](#).

### **Check your vaccine listing**

Please check that your clinic is properly listed at [ct.gov/covidvaccine](https://ct.gov/covidvaccine). **This is especially important as we anticipate booster dose administration to begin shortly.** Please send an email with any updates, corrections, or additions to [Caroline.Hou@ct.gov](mailto:Caroline.Hou@ct.gov).

### **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](#).

### **FDA Statement issued from Dr. Woodcock and Dr. Marks**

[FDA Will Follow The Science On COVID-19 Vaccines For Young Children](#) September 10

### **FAQ Videos About the COVID-19 Vaccines & Children**

**THE CONVERSATION / LA CONVERSACIÓN** expands to address [the COVID-19 vaccines and children](#) with new FAQ videos featuring pediatricians. Pediatricians Answer Questions About Kids & the COVID-19 Vaccines, presented with the American Academy of Pediatrics. Comedian and TV host, **W. Kamau Bell** returns to ask the questions that many parents and caregivers have about the vaccine in a launch video for the series. Materials available [here](#).

**Report vaccine temperature excursions and vaccines wasted to the Helpdesk** by following the prompts and submitting a ticket.

- Immediately report all temperature excursions in storage units containing COVID-19 vaccines. Staff will be notified in real time of the excursion and will assist you. Please store vaccines in the storage unit in a paper bag marked "do not use" until a determination about the viability of the vaccine has been made, in consultation with the manufacturer and the Immunization Program.
- Also report to the Helpdesk all COVID-19 vaccines deemed wasted or expired. This includes Pfizer vials from which a sixth dose cannot be extracted.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine and Pregnancy**

The increased circulation of the highly contagious [Delta variant](#), the [low vaccine uptake among pregnant people](#), and the increased risk of severe illness and pregnancy complications related to COVID-19 infection among pregnant people make vaccination for this population more urgent than ever.

The CDC webpage [COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#) contains some key messages for you to share with your patients.

### **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 [DPH.Immunizations@ct.gov](mailto:DPH.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:* You should issue CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Cards to your vaccine recipients. DPH cannot issue a CDC card to recipients. DPH can provide the immunization record from CT WiZ. DPH's procedure is on our COVID-19 Vaccine and DPH Immunization webpages at: [I lost my vaccine card, how do I get another one? \(ct.gov\)](#) and [Request an Official Immunization Record](#).

### **Upcoming Clinic Trainings and Office Hours**

- **CoVP Update -- next meeting September 22<sup>nd</sup>.**  
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 & Thursdays** 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.

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