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Sent: Monday, October 24, 2022 12:49 PM
Subject: CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Updates



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

October 24, 2022

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 our communications are archived on our [web site](#).

Updated Novavax Booster Recommendation

Last week the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) signed a [decision memo allowing Novavax COVID-19 vaccine \(the original, monovalent formulation\) to be administered as a booster dose for people ages 18 years and older](#), following FDA's granting of [emergency use authorization](#).

This action gives people ages 18 years and older the option to receive a Novavax monovalent booster instead of an updated (bivalent) Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna booster if they have completed primary series vaccination but have not previously received a COVID-19 booster— and if they cannot or will not receive mRNA vaccines.

Some may be unable to receive an mRNA vaccine as a result of an allergy to a component of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, or as a result of a history of a severe allergic reaction (such as anaphylaxis) after a previous dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, or a lack of availability of an mRNA vaccine. People ages 18 and older may also choose to receive a Novavax monovalent booster if they are unwilling to receive mRNA vaccines and would otherwise not receive a booster dose.

[Interim Clinical Considerations](#) for healthcare providers have been updated and other [associated materials](#) will be updated shortly.

Coadministration of COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccines

Please remember that CDC and ACIP guidance state that [COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered](#) with other vaccines, including the flu vaccine, if the recipient is eligible for the vaccines.

Providers should report both their flu and COVID-19 vaccine inventory status and help ensure that the public can find vaccines near them. Guides on how to add flu vaccines and report flu vaccine inventory status for your location are available on the Vaccines.gov [provider resources page](#).

COVID-19 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. (See box below)
- Based on the latest expiration information, REMOVE expired vaccine from the storage unit IMMEDIATELY. Do not give staff opportunity to administer expired vaccine.
 - If expired vaccine is inadvertently 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.

Report expired and wasted vaccine

- Please promptly report any expired and/or wasted vaccine to the CT WiZ [Helpdesk](#). Keep in mind that there are no negative consequences for reporting waste, and it will not negatively impact future vaccine orders.

Expiry Look-up Tool Links

Pfizer: <https://lotexpiry.cvdvaccine.com>

- Pfizer **Orange** cap (ages 5-11) is shipping with 11/30 expiry
- Pfizer **Purple** cap has expired! Zero out inventory in VaccineFinder, report waste, move to Gray*

Moderna: <https://modernacovid19global.com/vial-lookup>

Novavax: <https://us.novavaxcovidvaccine.com/hcp>

Johnson and Johnson/Janssen: <https://vaxcheck.jnj/>

- Most Janssen COVID 19 vaccine in the field is now expired!
- Limited inventory remains for ordering (all dated Jan 2023 expiry)

There should be no **Pfizer Purple Cap vials remaining in storage. If you have purple cap vials in storage, please dispose of it and report them as waste.*

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

For the CT DPH Immunization Program, visit: [Contact Us](#)

For the COVID-19 webpage, visit: [COVID-19 Vaccine Program](#)

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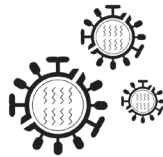
Communicating the Benefits of Influenza Vaccine during COVID-19

Influenza (flu) severity varies from year to year, but flu season always brings serious consequences. Flu outbreaks were limited in the 2020–2022 seasons due to widespread use of COVID-19 prevention measures like masks and social distancing. But flu viruses never went completely away. As COVID-19 prevention measures were relaxed, flu viruses and flu-related complications like pneumonia and heart attacks resurfaced. Flu outbreaks are unpredictable; vaccination is the best preparation for any influenza season.

Flu vaccination is the best way to prevent flu and its complications. Everyone age 6 months and older is recommended to get a yearly flu vaccine. This can markedly lower the risk of influenza-related illness, hospitalization, and death. And because flu and COVID-19 share many symptoms, preventing flu means fewer people will need to seek medical care and testing for flu and COVID-19, saving time, money, and stress. Flu vaccine may be given at the same time as COVID-19 vaccine. Take advantage of every opportunity to make a strong recommendation for flu vaccinations to your patients.

CDC estimates the annual impact of flu from 2010–2022* ranged from:

8.0 million–45 million flu **illnesses** 3.7 million–21 million flu **medical visits** 82,000–810,000 flu **hospitalizations** 5,000–61,000 flu **deaths**



* SOURCE: CDC Disease Burden of Influenza (www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden). 2020-21 season excluded (COVID-19 measures widely implemented).

What are the Benefits of Seasonal Flu Vaccine?

Research shows flu vaccination¹:

Reduces Hospitalization and Death

- ✓ Pediatric deaths from flu were cut in half for children with underlying high-risk medical conditions and by two-thirds for healthy children
- ✓ Influenza hospitalizations were cut in half for all adults (including those 65+ years of age)
- ✓ Influenza hospitalizations dropped dramatically among people with chronic health conditions – by 79% for people with diabetes and 52% for those with chronic lung disease
- ✓ Vaccinating long-term care facility (LTCF) staff reduces hospitalizations and deaths in LTCF residents

Reduces Severity of Illness in Hospitalized Individuals

- ✓ Among adults hospitalized with flu, intensive care unit (ICU) admissions decreased by more than half (59%), and they spent fewer days in the ICU if vaccinated
- ✓ Children's risk of admission to a pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) for flu-related illness was cut by almost 75%

Reduces Risks for Major Cardiac Events

- ✓ Risk of a major cardiac event (e.g., heart attack) among adults with existing cardiovascular disease was reduced by more than one-third

Protects Pregnant Women and Their Babies

- ✓ For pregnant women, flu-associated acute respiratory infections were cut in half, and flu-associated hospitalizations were reduced by 40%
- ✓ Influenza illnesses and influenza-related hospitalizations in infants under 6 months of age fell by half when their mothers were vaccinated

Vaccination rates* remain well below optimal levels:

- 55%** children 6 months–17 years
- 45%** adults 18+ years
- 68%** adults 65+ years
- 80%** healthcare personnel
- 50%** pregnant women

*Preliminary estimates from the 2021–22 influenza season. SOURCE: CDC FluVaxView Dashboard (www.cdc.gov/flu/fluvoxview/dashboard) HCP estimate is from 2020–21 season.

Tips

for Discussing Flu Vaccine

- **Recommend flu vaccine at every clinical encounter:** “I strongly recommend you get a flu vaccination today. Flu vaccine may be given at the same time as COVID-19 vaccine.”
- **Keep it simple:** “Flu vaccine helps reduce risk of hospitalization and death.” “Flu complications can happen in anyone, but especially babies, children under 5, people with health issues, and older adults.”
- **Use a presumptive approach:** “Today we are giving you your annual flu vaccination.”
- **Communicate why we vaccinate:** “Vaccination prevents flu and severe outcomes of flu.” “Preventing the flu means preventing missed workdays, doctor appointments, and testing because of flu symptoms. Flu vaccination can also help prevent flu and COVID-19 co-infections, which can cause more severe illnesses.”²
- **Communicate the variability and unpredictability of flu:** “Flu seasons are always unpredictable. But the best way to prepare for any flu season is to get a flu vaccine.”
- **Acknowledge that flu vaccination is not always a perfect match with the circulating virus types but “the vaccine is the best way to reduce your risk of flu and flu complications.”**

FOOTNOTES

¹ CDC. What are the benefits of flu vaccination? www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccine-benefits.htm

² Dao, 2021, *Journal of Clinical Virology Plus*. DOI: 10.1016/j.jcvp.2021.100036

