



May 18, 2021

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to announce three important updates. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is now authorized and recommended for use in adolescents ages 12 to 15 years in the United States (U.S.), and guidance on adolescent consent has been provided by New York State. In addition, COVID-19 vaccines can now be co-administered with other vaccines in all age groups.

Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for use in adolescents ages 12-15 years

Adolescents, especially those who are Black and Latino, are at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 infection. Among adolescents 12 to 17 years old, more than 1.5 million cases of COVID-19, over 13,000 hospitalizations due to COVID-19, and over 800 cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) have been [reported in the U.S. to date](#). Adolescents can also spread COVID-19 infection to others, including within households and communities.

On May 10, 2021, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an [amended Emergency Use Authorization](#) that approved the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in adolescents ages 12 to 15 years. On May 12, 2021, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine's use in this age group. The recommendation was based on data from a clinical trial that enrolled approximately 2,200 adolescents ages 12 to 15 years and demonstrated 100% two-dose vaccine efficacy of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in preventing symptomatic, laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection. The vaccine was well tolerated and had a similar side-effect profile to that seen in persons ages 16 to 25 years. Pain at the injection site was the most commonly reported side effect (79%-86%), followed by fatigue (60%-66%), headache (55%-64%), chills (28%-42%), joint pain (10%-16%), muscle pain (24%-32%), and fever (10%-20%). Symptoms were described as mild to moderate and were more common after the second dose, except for pain at the injection site. The proportion of trial participants who reported at least one serious adverse event was 0.4% in the vaccine group versus 0.2% in the placebo group. No serious adverse events were considered by the FDA as possibly related to vaccine.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine should be administered to adolescents ages 12 to 15 years on the same schedule used for older age groups: two doses, separated by at least 21 days. Clinical considerations, contraindications and precautions are also the same as for other age groups. Refer to the CDC's [MMWR](#), Interim Recommendation for Use of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine in Adolescents Aged 12–15 Years, for more information.

Proof of consent for minors

A parent or guardian must provide consent for their child to be vaccinated in person or by phone. Some providers, including all City-run sites, will accept proof of consent in writing. All minors who are ages 12 to 15 years must be accompanied to the vaccination site by a parent or guardian, or another adult caregiver designated by the parent/guardian. The child must also have a completed [New York State COVID-19 Vaccine Form](#). New York State guidance for facilities can be found [here](#); see Appendix A of the New York State guidance for information regarding necessary consent for individuals under 18 years of age.



You serve as one of the most trusted sources of information for your patients. Your strong recommendation for vaccination is critical to your patients choosing to get vaccinated. Please remind parents of the benefits of vaccination, including protecting their children's health and the ability to start returning to activities that have been stopped because of the pandemic. Focus on reducing barriers to vaccination, particularly for people from communities that have been most impacted. Prompt conversations with parents and patients to address concerns.

Additional COVID-19 vaccine information for providers, including patient handouts and guides for having conversations about vaccines, can be found on the websites of the NYC Health Department ([here](#)) and for pediatric providers on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website ([here](#)). General resources for providers about COVID-19 vaccination from the NYC Health Department can be found [here](#).

Co-administration of COVID-19 and non-COVID vaccines in all age groups

COVID-19 and other vaccines may now be administered regardless of timing between COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 vaccines (including live vaccines). This includes concurrent administration of COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 vaccines on the same day, as well as administration within 14 days. This will allow adolescents 12 years and older and adults who present for a COVID-19 vaccination to receive other immunizations, including those they may have missed during the pandemic. For some patients, providers may want to consider the reactogenicity profile of other vaccines known to be more reactogenic, such as adjuvanted vaccines (e.g., Shingrix) when deciding whether to co-administer with the COVID-19 vaccine. See the CDC website ([here](#)) for more information.

COVID-19 vaccine resources in New York City

The Pfizer-BioNTech and other COVID-19 vaccines are available at numerous sites including pharmacies, Federally Qualified Health Centers and hospitals throughout New York City. See [here](#) for a list of City-run sites that accept walk-ins and [here](#) for a list of City-run sites offering Pfizer vaccine for youth. Patients can check vaccinefinder.nyc.gov or call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) for assistance making an appointment at a City-run site. They can also search by vaccine brand, walk in or ADA accessible to find the right site for their needs.

Providers and staff can now access a dedicated provider line to help patients make vaccine appointments by calling 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) and pressing 2 at the second prompt. In addition, providers can directly refer a patient to the Vaccine Appointment Hotline by filling out a [short request form](#). Patients referred through this form will receive a call within 48 hours.

Thank you for your continued partnership in the historic NYC COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

Sincerely,

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NYC Health Department Resources

- For information for providers on COVID-19 vaccines, go to nyc.gov/health/covidvaccineprovider
- For information for providers on communicating with patients about COVID-19 vaccines, go to nyc.gov/VaccineTalks
- To receive Health Alerts, go to <https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/NYCMED/Account/HANSubscribe>
- To subscribe to receive Dear Colleague Letters, sign up for a *City Health Information* subscription at nyc.gov/health/register
- For general provider information and to register to attend the NYC Health Department's COVID-19 Provider Webinars, go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-providers.page>