



Today, April 13th, the CDC and FDA issued a recommendation for health care practitioners to PAUSE administering the Johnson & Johnson (J & J/Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine. The pause was announced following six reported cases of **rare** and severe blood clotting reactions in individuals after receiving the J & J vaccine. To date, nearly 7 million doses of the vaccine have been administered in the U.S. and just six cases of this reaction have been reported.

In these cases, a cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) was seen in combination with low blood platelets levels (thrombocytopenia). Associated symptoms were severe headache, trouble breathing, severe abdominal pain and sharp pains in the leg, especially localized to the calf. All six U.S. cases occurred in female patients between the ages of 18 and 48 with symptoms occurring 6-13 days after vaccination.

The use of heparin, an anticoagulant drug, has proven to be dangerous and potentially fatal in patients who experience this reaction. The CDC and FDA issued this pause to provide time to educate health care practitioners on appropriate treatment for patients experiencing this side effect.

There have been no red flags reported with either of the two mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna and can continue to be used.

Recommendations

- Pause the use of J & J vaccine until the ACIP and FDA further review these CVST cases in the context of thrombocytopenia and assess their potential significance.
- If you have received the J & J vaccine, monitor for severe symptoms beyond typical vaccine reactions- severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath- for three weeks after vaccination.
- Continue to address vaccine hesitancy by educating on the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccines. Emphasize safety is a top priority and although these adverse events appear to be extremely rare, they are taken seriously.
- Report serious or life-threatening adverse events following any vaccine to Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System ([VAERS](#)).
- **Do not halt vaccinations! Continue vaccinating new admits and staff without interruption as Consonus is fully equipped with the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.**

Consonus Pharmacy is committed to keeping you informed and will provide updates when available.