

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a plan to begin offering COVID-19 vaccine booster shots this fall. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), met on August 30<sup>th</sup> to review data. They did not make a recommendation to amend the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for booster doses yet, but they discussed a preliminary risk-based approach to target long-term-care (LTC) residents and healthcare personnel. They will continue to meet and discuss data on the evolution of the pandemic and the use of COVID-19 vaccines. ACIP will make further recommendations on the use of boosters for the public after a thorough review of the evidence.

Q: [When can I offer COVID-19 vaccine boosters to my residents and staff?](#)

A: Not immediately. The goal is for people to start receiving a COVID-19 booster shot beginning in the fall, with individuals being eligible starting 8 months after they received their second dose of an mRNA vaccine (either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna). This is subject to authorization by the FDA and ACIP. FDA is conducting an independent evaluation to determine the safety and effectiveness of a booster dose of the mRNA vaccines. ACIP will decide whether to issue a booster dose recommendation based on a thorough review of the evidence.

Q: [Who will be the first people to get a booster dose IF the FDA authorizes and the ACIP recommends?](#)

A: The goal is for the first people eligible for a booster dose to be those who were the first to receive a COVID-19 vaccination (those who are most at risk). This includes healthcare providers and residents of LTC facilities.

Q: [Why is the United States waiting to start offering booster shots?](#)

A: The COVID-19 vaccines continue to be highly effective in reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant. However, COVID-19 constantly evolves. Experts are looking at all available data to understand how well the vaccines are working, including how new variants affect vaccine effectiveness. With the Delta variant, public health experts are starting to see reduced protection against mild and moderate disease. For that reason, HHS is planning for a booster shot so vaccinated people maintain protection over the coming months. If FDA authorizes and ACIP recommends it, the goal is for people to start receiving a COVID-19 booster shot this fall.

Q: [Can we start booster doses now for those that are not immunocompromised?](#)

A: No. Our team understands how eager everyone is to start administering booster doses. However, Consonus must wait for approval from FDA/CDC to dispense booster doses. We must adhere to our provider agreement with the FDA/CDC which allows us to dispense COVID-19 vaccine. The provider agreement does not allow for any pharmacy to provide the vaccine outside the EUA parameters (i.e., providing a third dose to a non-immunocompromised person).

Q: [What can we do NOW while we wait for the booster doses to be authorized?](#)

A: Make vaccination of currently unvaccinated individuals your TOP priority. Encourage those who have been waiting for full FDA approval to get vaccinated now that Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine has FDA approval for those 16-year-old and older.

Review the **Consonus Covid-19 Booster Dose Preparation Checklist**. This "to do" list will prepare your facility community to receive and administer vaccine efficiently.