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COVID-19 Vaccines – CDC's ACIP votes to recommend vaccine boosters

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met on October 21, 2021 to discuss the updated EUAs and to issue recommendations for use.

- ACIP reviewed booster data from Moderna and Janssen, as well as data from the NIH supporting heterologous use of available COVID-19 vaccines as booster doses regardless of which vaccine was used for the primary vaccination (ie, mix and match). ACIP also considered safety data retrieved from the various CDC safety monitoring systems to further assess the risks of known side effects of the current vaccines, including myopericarditis, and thrombosis.

- After extensive discussion, the ACIP recommended to align recommendations for booster doses as much as possible for the three available vaccines. ACIP voted unanimously in favor of the following two statements:

    — A single COVID-19 vaccine booster dose is recommended ≥ 6 months after completion of an mRNA primary series, in the same risk groups for whom CDC recommended a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine under the FDA's emergency use authorization.
    — A single COVID-19 vaccine booster dose is recommended for persons aged ≥ 18 years, ≥ 2 months after receipt of the initial Janssen dose under the FDA's emergency use authorization.

- For reference, ACIP had previously recommended for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine that a single booster dose be given ≥6 months after the completion of an mRNA primary series, under the FDA's EUA in persons:

    — Aged ≥ 65 years, and long-term care facility residence
    — Aged 50 to 64 years with underlying medical conditions
    — Based on individual benefit and risk in individuals who are age 18 to 49 years with underlying medical conditions.

- No vote taken on the mixing and matching of COVID-19 vaccines, but more details will be provided in an update to the ACIP's Clinical Considerations for Use document, with will be revised in the next few days.

- The booster dose of Moderna's vaccine will be 50 mcg, half of the dose used for the primary series (100 mcg). At this time, providers will need to use the existing multi-dose vials to draw up the 50-mcg dose. Moderna confirmed that the multidose vial can withstand the extra needle entries required. A new vial specific for the booster dose may be developed in the future, but the existing vial will need to be used for the foreseeable future.

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What's Next:

- The FDA is reviewing Pfizer's data submission for its COVID-19 vaccine administration in children 5 to 11 years of age. A Vaccine, Biologics and Related Products Advisory Meeting has been set for October 26 to review this data.

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