

September 8, 2022

Dear CPS Families and Staff,

You may have seen the exciting news this week that federal health officials have authorized an updated version of the COVID-19 vaccine. Here's what you need to know:

- Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations provides the greatest level of protection against severe illness and death from COVID-19. Vaccines are safe, effective, free, and widely available to Chicagoans aged 6 months and older. The CDC recommends COVID-19 vaccines for everyone ages 6 months and older, and boosters for everyone 5 years and older, if eligible.
- These updated vaccines, also known as “bivalent boosters,” were created to provide protection against Omicron subvariants, which make up more than 99% of the current COVID-19 infections in the U.S.
- These vaccines are available to Chicago residents 12 years and older who have already completed a primary vaccine series
 - A primary vaccine series means either two shots of the Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, or Novavax vaccine or one shot of J&J's Janssen vaccine.
- These vaccines will be available beginning today, Thursday, September 8 at CPS Regional Clinics and Elementary School Mobile Events, and beginning Monday, September 12 at Charters and High Schools. Visit cps.edu/vaccinations to find an appointment. Some [School-Based Health Centers](#) may also be offering this new vaccine; please call ahead for availability. Primary vaccine series are also available at all CPS-run vaccine events.
- Chicagoans are able to receive this updated vaccine two months after completing their primary vaccine series OR two months after their most recent booster shot.
- If you have recently had COVID-19, at minimum you must complete your isolation period before seeking a vaccine, and the CDC says you may consider waiting 3 months from your most recent infection.
- Time is of the essence. Getting this updated vaccine is extremely important to protect yourself and your loved ones as we head into colder weather and indoor holiday gatherings.

Below please find more information from the Chicago Department of Public Health about this updated vaccine and where it is currently available. CPS will begin offering its supply of vaccines Thursday, September 8, so please check our vaccination [website](#) to find a clinic near you. Visit Chicago.gov/Boost for the most up-to-date information about this updated vaccine.

The City of Chicago has already been allocated approximately 150,000 doses of the updated vaccines, with more following in the coming weeks. For those who need help finding a nearby site, Vaccines.gov is a free online service that you can use to search for pharmacies and providers that offer vaccination. Residents can also call the City's COVID-19 call center at 312-746-4835.

The new vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are being called "bivalent boosters," meaning they are a mix of two versions of the vaccine — both boosting protection against original coronavirus strain as well as (newly) protecting against the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron subvariants. Nearly all (99.8%) of COVID-19 new cases in the U.S. are BA.4 or BA.5.

Key details about the updated vaccines (bivalent boosters):

- These new vaccines are approved for those who have completed their primary series — two doses of an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) or one dose of Johnson & Johnson (J&J).
- The Pfizer vaccine is available for those age 12 and up, Moderna age 18 and up.
- The updated vaccines are recommended at least two months following completion of the primary series or booster vaccination.
- Patients can mix-and-match mRNA brands for their primary series, previous booster dose(s), and bivalent booster dose — you can also pair the updated vaccine with your annual flu shot and some other vaccines.
- This updated vaccine will replace current booster doses (monovalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) for individuals 12 years of age and older.
- The updated vaccines have met FDA and CDC's rigorous safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality standards.

Additional answers to frequently asked questions about the new vaccine will continue to be updated at [Chicago.gov/Boost](https://www.chicago.gov/Boost).

There are many ways people can get the updated vaccines. Call or visit your local pharmacy's website for more information on availability of the updated COVID-19 vaccine. More than 130 pharmacy locations in Chicago are expected to receive the updated vaccine this week:

- [CVS](#)
- [Jewel-Osco](#)
- [Walgreens](#)
- [Mariano's](#)
- [Walmart](#)
- [Costco](#)
- CDPH's in-home vaccination program, **Protect Chicago At Home**, will offer the updated COVID-19 vaccine, as well as primary doses for anyone age 6 months and up. Appointments for homebound individuals, those age 65 and up, as well as those living in certain zip codes will be prioritized. Up to 10 people can be vaccinated at a time. Make an at-home appointment at [Chicago.gov/AtHome](https://www.chicago.gov/AtHome) or by calling 312-746-4835.
- CDPH will continue to host **family vaccination clinics at City Colleges of Chicago** through the month of November. These events will offer flu shots, Pfizer and Moderna for children 6 months through 4 years old, as well as Pfizer vaccines and the updated bivalent booster doses to all eligible Chicagoans. Clinics will be open 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Registration is

recommended and is available at [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](https://www.chicago.gov/COVIDvax). The first clinics will be held Saturday, Sept. 10 at [Olive Harvey College](https://www.oliveharvey.edu) (10001 S. Woodlawn Ave.) and [Arturo Velasquez Westside Technical Institute](https://www.arturovelasquez.edu) (2800 S. Western Ave.). Walk-ins will be accommodated as space allows.

- CDPH is partnering with aldermen and organizations across all 50 wards to provide **flu/COVID-19 vaccination clinics** this fall, which will include the updated COVID-19 vaccine. This includes clinics held in partnership with the Department of Family and Support Services at locations serving seniors and other congregate settings. View the full schedule and find an event near you at [Chicago.gov/VaxCalendar](https://www.chicago.gov/VaxCalendar) — events will be added as they are confirmed.

COVID-19 vaccines — including the updated, bivalent boosters — are free, and no government-issued ID or insurance is required. Learn more at [Chicago.gov/COVIDvax](https://www.chicago.gov/COVIDvax).

We thank you for your partnership in keeping all in our CPS community healthy and safe and urge you to receive the updated COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you are eligible.

Sincerely,

TaShunda Green
Deputy Chief Health Officer
Chicago Public Schools