News Brief

FDA Approves Updated COVID-19 Vaccines and Boosters

On Monday, Sept. 11, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved new COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots from Moderna and Pfizer. This decision comes as COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations rise nationwide and the 2023-24 virus season quickly approaches.

Similar to how influenza (flu) vaccines are updated annually, COVID-19 boosters for this season are being formulated to target circulating coronavirus variants to offer better protection. As such, the new vaccines have been updated to fight against the Omicron variant XBB.1.5 and other closely related strains. The FDA also noted that last year's Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 boosters are no longer authorized in the country.

The updated vaccines are approved for people 12 and older and are authorized under emergency use for children 6 months through 11 years old.

"Vaccination remains critical to public health and continued protection against serious consequences of COVID-19, including hospitalization and death."

- Dr. Peter Marks, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research

What's Next?

Before updated COVID-19 vaccines will be available, a panel of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) vaccine advisors must weigh in on the recommendations. The committee is scheduled to vote this week on the updated shots.

Pending final CDC approvals, Moderna and Pfizer can begin shipping out COVID-19 boosters this week, and the shots can be administered at pharmacies, health clinics and other vaccine distribution sites. At that time, Americans can ask their doctors about receiving an updated COVID-19 booster vaccine when they receive their annual flu shot. The updated booster shots provide the best protection against the coronavirus and can reduce hospitalizations. The FDA says all Americans as young as 6 months are authorized to get at least one dose from either Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, and the CDC panel may release further recommendations.

Individuals should continue to monitor the FDA and CDC's guidance for updates. Contact your health care provider to learn more about COVID-19 vaccine booster eligibility and vaccines in general.