

Further expansion of COVID-19 vaccination arrangements from January 1

The Government announced today (December 24) that the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme will be further expanded starting from January 1, 2022. The arrangements are as follows:

- * extension of the opening hours of nine of the 10 Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) to enable members of the public to receive a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine;
- * provision of a third dose vaccination service to all eligible persons who have received two doses of the BioNTech vaccine with the second dose received six months ago;
- * provision of a second dose vaccination service to persons who have recovered from previous COVID-19 infection; and
- * provision of a second dose BioNTech vaccination service to persons aged 12 to 17.

"Under the spreading threat posed by mutant virus strains, people who are yet to receive vaccination should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected. Eligible persons should receive a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible to enhance protection and build a protective barrier in the community," a Government spokesman said.

Extension of opening hours of CVCs

Starting from January 1, nine CVCs will operate daily and their opening hours will be extended from 8am to 8pm. The opening hours of the HKU CVC at Gleneagles Hospital Hong Kong remains unchanged. Please see Annex for details.

The three CVCs providing the Sinovac vaccine are located at Java Road Sports Centre in North Point, Kwun Chung Sports Centre in Jordan and Yuen Wo Road Sports Centre in Sha Tin. The seven CVCs providing the BioNTech vaccine are located at Sai Wan Ho Sports Centre, Hiu Kwong Street Sports Centre in Kwun Tong, Lai Chi Kok Park Sports Centre, Yuen Long Sports Centre, Gleneagles Hospital Hong Kong in Wong Chuk Hang, CUHK Medical Centre in Sha Tin and Osman Ramju Sadick Memorial Sports Centre in Kwai Chung.

Starting from 8am on January 1, members of the public can make reservations for vaccination in the new time slots through the booking system at the designated website of the Vaccination Programme (booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk). Eligible persons can also collect same-day tickets and get vaccinated at the CVCs (except those located at a private

hospital) without prior booking. The tickets will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Currently, there are various vaccination channels for the public to receive vaccination. Apart from CVCs, members of the public can also get vaccinated at COVID-19 Vaccination Stations at public hospitals, designated clinics under the Hospital Authority, private clinics providing the Sinovac vaccination service, private healthcare institutions that have enrolled in the BioNTech Vaccination Pilot Scheme, as well as the COVID-19 mobile vaccination stations.

Starting from December 30, COVID-19 Vaccination Stations will be set up at Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital in Tai Po and Yan Chai Hospital in Tsuen Wan to provide a walk-in service for BioNTech vaccination. By that time, the number of vaccination stations at public hospitals will be increased to 13.

A COVID-19 mobile vaccination station which operates as a vaccination vehicle will continue to serve the public. Another mobile vaccination station operating in the form of a container will commence operation on January 7 to enable more people, in particular elderly persons, to receive COVID-19 vaccination.

Members of the public can refer to the designated website for the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/programme) for the latest information including vaccination venues, reservation and enquiry hotlines. The service schedule of the mobile vaccination stations has been uploaded to the website and will be updated from time to time.

Third dose of COVID-19 vaccination for persons who have received two doses of BioNTech vaccine for six months

The Government has put in place vaccination arrangements for persons under certain groups to receive a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine on a priority basis since November 11, and the arrangements were expanded on November 23 to cover persons who had received two doses of the Sinovac vaccine with the second dose received six months ago. In accordance with the recommendations by the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health, the Government has decided to further expand the arrangements for the third dose vaccination.

Persons aged 18 and above who have received two doses of the BioNTech vaccine with the second dose received six months ago can make reservations for and receive a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine starting from 8am on January 1.

In other words, members of the public who have received two doses of the BioNTech vaccine or the Sinovac vaccine six months ago can receive a third

dose starting from January 1.

For individuals who have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine more than three months ago, if they have personal needs (e.g. travel abroad), they can go to the CVCs and their requests to receive the third dose earlier will be handled on a discretionary basis in accordance with individual circumstances.

For the third dose vaccination arrangements for immunocompromised persons (e.g. cancer patients, organ transplant recipients, advanced-stage HIV patients and persons taking active immunosuppressive drugs), they have to bring along with them a medical certificate on the day of vaccination so that they can receive the third dose between four weeks and three months from their second dose.

Individuals who have recovered from previous COVID-19 infection and received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine

Currently, persons who have recovered from previous COVID-19 infection are required to receive one dose of vaccine. Starting from January 1, recovered persons who have received one dose of COVID-19 vaccine six months ago can receive a second dose at CVCs. For recovered persons who have received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine more than three months ago, if they have personal needs (e.g. travel abroad), they can go to the CVCs and their requests to receive the second dose earlier will be handled on a discretionary basis in accordance with individual circumstances.

For persons aged between 12 and 17 who have received one dose of the BioNTech vaccine

Starting from 8am on January 1, persons aged from 12 to 17 can make reservations for and receive the second dose of the BioNTech vaccine at least 12 weeks after the first dose of the BioNTech vaccine. For those with special needs (e.g. study abroad) who opt to receive the second dose 21 days after their first dose, they are required to bring along a consent form signed by their parent and must be accompanied by their parent to the CVCs on the day of vaccination.

Moreover, in accordance with the recommendations by the experts, starting from January 1, for adolescents receiving the BioNTech vaccine, the vaccine will be administered in the muscle of the mid-antrolateral thigh. They should wear loose-fitting clothing for ease of vaccination.

Vaccination recommendations

Before making an appointment, members of the public should take note of a minimum interval of 14 days between COVID-19 vaccination and any other vaccination (including seasonal influenza vaccination). The minimum age for

receiving the Sinovac and the BioNTech vaccine is 12.

Persons aged below 18 are required to bring along a consent form signed by their parent for getting their vaccinations (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/Consent_Form_for_COVID19_Vaccination_ENG.pdf).

For consensus interim recommendations on COVID-19 vaccination from Scientific Committees under the CHP, please visit: www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202112/23/P2021122300757.htm.