

JCVI issues new vaccination advice for children and young people

Following extensive assessment of the risks and benefits of vaccinations for 5 to 11 year olds, including analysis of clinical trial results and real-world international data, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has updated its advice for this age group.

Children aged 5 to 11, who are in a clinical risk group or who are a household contact of someone (of any age) who is immunosuppressed, should be offered a primary course of vaccination.

Primary course vaccination for these children should be with 2 10-microgram doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (a third of the adult dose), with an interval of 8 weeks between the first and second doses.

Further advice regarding COVID-19 vaccination for other 5 to 11 year olds will be issued in due course following consideration of additional data relevant to this age group, and on the Omicron variant more broadly.

Boosters

Separately, in response to the threat from the Omicron variant, the JCVI has advised that booster vaccinations should be offered to persons aged:

- 16 to 17 years
- 12 to 15 who are in a clinical risk group or who are a household contact of someone (of any age) who is immunosuppressed
- 12 to 15 years who are severely immunocompromised and who have had a third primary dose

The booster vaccination for these age groups should be with 30 micrograms of the PfizerBioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, given no sooner than 3 months after completion of the primary course.

Professor Wei Shen Lim, Chair, COVID-19 immunisation, JCVI, said:

The majority of children aged 5 to 11 are at very low risk of serious illness due to COVID-19. However, some 5 to 11 year olds have underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk, and we advise these children to be vaccinated in the first instance.

For children and young people who have completed a primary course of vaccination, a booster dose will provide added protection

against the Omicron variant.