

Scientific Committees under CHP update consensus interim recommendations on use of Comirnaty vaccine

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 (JSC) convened a meeting today (December 23), joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel (EAP), to discuss and update consensus interim recommendations on the use of Comirnaty vaccine in Hong Kong.

During the meeting, the JSC-EAP reviewed the latest situation of Omicron variant, studies of effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines against Omicron variant and overseas recommendations on use of COVID-19 vaccines. In view of the latest global Omicron situation, the JSC-EAP recommends individuals who are not vaccinated to receive vaccination as soon as possible to protect from severe illnesses and complications. For individuals aged 18 years and above who had received two doses of Comirnaty or CoronaVac vaccine, a third dose of Comirnaty vaccine is strongly recommended while this dose is recommended to be administered as soon as possible six months after the second dose. Individuals with personal needs (e.g. travel to overseas countries) can receive this dose earlier but not less than three months after the previous dose. Nevertheless, personal choice for the vaccines is respected.

The experts also recommended pregnant and lactating women to receive the mRNA vaccines, including a third dose, with the same administration arrangements as for the general adult population. For persons with previous infection, a second dose of Comirnaty vaccine at six months after the first dose is recommended.

The use of Comirnaty vaccine for children and adolescents aged 12 to 17, previously recommended to receive one dose instead of two doses in September this year, was revisited by the JSC-EAP. Emerging data suggest that two doses of Comirnaty vaccine with a longer interval would result in better immune response as well as lowering the risk of myocarditis and/or pericarditis when compared with a shorter interval. In view of the emergence of the Omicron variant, the JSC-EAP recommended persons aged 12 to 17 years to receive the second dose of the Comirnaty vaccine at least 12 weeks after the first dose of Comirnaty vaccine. The JSC-EAP also recommended intramuscular injection of the Comirnaty vaccine at mid-anterolateral thigh, especially for male children and male adolescents.

Details of the interim recommendations are available at the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html).