

Scientific Committees under CHP updated consensus interim recommendations on use of COVID-19 vaccines in persons with previous COVID-19 infections and children

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (JSC) under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health convened an online meeting, joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel (EAP) yesterday (March 12) to discuss the use of COVID-19 vaccines in persons with previous COVID-19 infections and children, and the updated consensus interim recommendations is published today (March 13).

The JSC-EAP discussed the use of CoronaVac vaccine and Comirnaty vaccine for people with previous infection, including different age groups as well as the immunocompromised.

Taking into account local context, overseas practice and recommendations by the World Health Organization with reference taken from previous recommendation on time interval for subsequent doses, the JSC-EAP made recommendations on the number of vaccine doses required and the dosing interval which are tabulated in the Annex.

In short, immunocompetent persons with past history of receiving two or more doses of CoronaVac or Comirnaty vaccine before infection would not need to be vaccinated after recovery, whereas a maximum of two additional doses after recovery may be required for those who have not received two doses, depending on age and number of doses received before the infection.

While children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 recovered from COVID-19 who would like to receive Comirnaty vaccine are recommended to receive a maximum of one dose, a second dose after recovery would still be allowed to cater personal need (e.g. studying overseas) if informed consent is obtained.

Immunocompromised persons recovered from COVID-19 are recommended to receive additional doses generally in shorter time intervals than counterparts who are immunocompetent.

The experts had no objection on an expedited vaccination programme with a shorter interval between doses given during extensive outbreak for residents of residential care homes for the elderly in Hong Kong.

During the meeting, the JSC-EAP also revisited the third dose of COVID-19 vaccination for children younger than 12 years old. The JSC-EAP

considered a primary course of vaccination would comprise of two doses of Comirnaty vaccine or three doses of CoronaVac vaccine in adults and eligible children. Based on this principle, the experts recommended a third dose of CoronaVac vaccine for children aged 3 to 11 to be given at least three months after receiving the second dose of CoronaVac vaccine.

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