

Third dose COVID-19 vaccination arrangements for persons under certain groups

The Government announced today (November 3) that taking reference from experts' recommendations, eligible persons under certain groups, i.e. immunocompromised patients and persons with a higher risk of infection, can receive a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine free of charge starting from November 11 (Thursday). Booking for third dose vaccination for these persons will open on November 5.

Individuals who are classified as priority groups for receiving a third dose include:

- Certain groups of immunocompromised patients (e.g. cancer patients, organ transplant recipients, advanced-stage HIV patients and patients taking active immunosuppressive drugs). The third dose should be administered at least four weeks from the second dose.
- Those who have received two doses of Sinovac vaccine and with a higher risk of infection, including elderly aged 60 or above; healthcare workers; persons with chronic illnesses; and workers at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational setting (e.g. personnel participating in anti-epidemic related work; personnel providing cross-boundary transportation or working at control points and ports). The third dose should be administered at least six months from the second dose.

For the above two groups, experts recommend that a third dose of Fosun/BioNTech vaccine may elicit a better immune response. That said, personal preference is respected and members of the public may choose the type of vaccine according to their own circumstances. It is suggested that they consult their physician if necessary.

- For individuals aged 18 or above in the aforementioned higher risk populations who have received two doses of Fosun/BioNTech vaccine, an additional dose of Fosun/BioNTech vaccine administered at least six months from the second dose is recommended. These persons may, however, choose Sinovac vaccine as the third dose.
- Currently, individuals who are fully recovered from COVID-19 are only

required to receive one dose of vaccine. Recovered patients should discuss with their physician whether two doses of COVID-19 vaccine are required, and an interval of six months between the two doses is recommended.

Channels for eligible persons to receive a third dose

(1) Starting from November 5 (Friday), eligible persons under certain groups can make reservations for vaccination on or after November 11 at Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) (Appendix I) or designated clinics of the Hospital Authority (Appendix II) through the designated website of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).

(2) They can 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.

(3) Patients and visitors of public hospitals can receive Fosun/BioNTech vaccination without prior booking at nine COVID-19 Vaccination Stations (Appendix III) in Queen Mary Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Tuen Mun Hospital, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, Tseung Kwan O Hospital, Caritas Medical Centre, Prince of Wales Hospital, Pok Oi Hospital and North District Hospital.

(4) They can also make reservation for Sinovac vaccination through private doctors or clinics enrolled in the Vaccination Programme. The list of private doctors/clinics is available at the designated website of the Vaccination Programme (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/VSS).

Procedures for third dose reservation and vaccination

The designated website of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk) will refresh its layout at 9am on November 5 (Friday). Persons who would like to make a reservation for a third dose in the reservation system only have to select the particular group they belong to and uploading of supporting documents is not required in the reservation stage. They should show their supporting documents to CVC staff for verification on the day of vaccination.

As immunocompromised patients should receive the third dose at least four weeks from the second dose, they should bring along with them a medical certificate for the third dose. A medical certificate template will be available at the designated website later.

For immunocompromised persons aged between 12 and 17, they are required to bring along a consent form signed by their parents. They must be accompanied by their parents to the CVC on the day of vaccination. A template of the consent form can be downloaded from the designated website.

For persons with a higher risk of infection, persons aged 60 or above can show their Hong Kong identification document for verification.

Healthcare workers and workers at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational setting can provide their work certifications or make a declaration stating that they work in the relevant trades.

For individuals who have taken two doses of Sinovac vaccine and fall outside the higher risk groups, if they need to take the third dose with priority for special reasons, such as they need to travel to overseas places with high risks of infection in the near future, they may bring along their air tickets to the CVCs. Their requests will be handled on a discretionary basis.

Persons with chronic illnesses should consult their physician on the appropriate time to receive the third dose. To facilitate their vaccination, relevant documentary proof is not necessary.

The Fosun/BioNTech vaccine is for persons aged 12 or above while the Sinovac vaccine is for persons aged 18 or above.

Members of the public should get vaccinated as early as possible

Under the threat posed by mutant strains, members of the public should get vaccinated early in a bid to reduce their risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected. Unvaccinated persons should get their first dose as early as possible. Should there be an epidemic outbreak, unvaccinated persons will face a serious health risk.

Members of the public should receive their first and second doses early and persons belonging to the abovementioned groups should receive their third dose on time for self-protection.