

Toddler and paediatric formulation of JN.1 COVID-19 vaccines to be provided end of month

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced today (February 21) that starting from February 25, the JN.1 vaccine will be provided to infants and children aged 6 months to 11 years, replacing the XBB mRNA vaccine (XBB vaccine) currently in use. The CHP also urges those who have not received the initial dose of the COVID-19 vaccine (including infants and children) to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Those at high risk (particularly the elderly and persons with underlying comorbidities) should receive a booster dose as soon as possible for effective prevention against COVID-19.

Vaccine supply

Given that the predominant strains circulating in Hong Kong are JN.1 and its descendant lineages, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the CHP have [recommended](#) the use of JN.1 lineage COVID-19 vaccines earlier.

In light of the above, the Government has been offering the JN.1 vaccine to persons aged 12 years or above under the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme since November 19 last year and has actively procured the toddler and paediatric JN.1 formulation for infants and children aged 6 months to 11 years.

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About 6 000 doses of Comirnaty JN.1 toddler and paediatric formulation (around 3 000 doses each) have recently arrived in Hong Kong. After stringent checks and inspections to ensure that the vaccine complies with product specifications and relevant cold-chain standards, Government staff have properly stored the vaccines in validated ultra-low temperature freezers at the temperature specified by the drug manufacturer. The Government will, taking into account future vaccine demand, procure COVID-19 vaccines from suppliers in a timely manner.

Booking and vaccination arrangements

Under the Government COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, persons aged 6 months or above can receive free initial dose(s). High-risk priority groups can receive booster doses for free at least six months after the last dose or COVID-19 infection (whichever is later), regardless of the number of doses received previously.

â€‹High-risk priority groups include:

- older adults aged 50 or above, including those living in residential

care homes;

- persons aged 18 to 49 years with underlying comorbidities;
- persons with immunocompromising conditions aged 6 months and above;
- pregnant women; and
- healthcare workers.

Eligible persons may schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment via the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme [booking system](#). Infants and children aged 6 months to 11 years who schedule COVID-19 vaccine appointments on or after February 25 will receive the JN.1 vaccine. Infants and children may receive the COVID-19 vaccine at Hong Kong Children's Hospital, designated Maternal and Child Health Centres, designated Student Health Service Centres under the DH and designated Private Clinic COVID-19 Community Vaccination Stations. For details of vaccination venues, please refer to the [webpage](#). As mentioned above, the Government has been offering the JN.1 vaccine to persons aged 12 years or above participating in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme since November 19 last year.

As persons who contract influenza and COVID-19 at the same time would be at a higher risk of severe complications and death, the CHP strongly recommends that high-risk individuals receive seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) and COVID-19 vaccination booster to reduce risks of serious illness and death. The WHO has also pointed out that high-risk persons should receive booster doses at appropriate times to lower risks of serious illness and death.

For citizens who have not yet received SIV while receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, they can check with vaccination venues for arrangements for influenza vaccination. According to scientific evidence, COVID-19 vaccines and seasonal influenza vaccines can be administered at the same time to provide dual protection.

Members of the public may visit the CHP's [COVID-19 Vaccination Programme](#) and [seasonal influenza](#) webpage for more details.