UN Medical Directors Recommendations
for additional vaccine and booster doses\(^1\) for Covid-19 vaccinations

Against the background of the ongoing global circulation of SARS-COV2 and the availability of Covid-19 vaccines, the UN Medical Directors (UNMD) welcome the continuation of the UN vaccination deployment efforts as part of the UN’s first line of defence to strengthen vulnerable duty stations thus ensuring the protection and discharging the duty of care to UN personnel, families and partners, in particular those who are at increased occupational risk\(^2\).

As part of the UN strategy and the system-wide deployment effort of Covid-19 vaccines to UN duty stations and missions, the UNMD provide the following recommendations:

1. To continue guaranteeing access to **primary vaccination** series from WHO EUL\(^3\) approved vaccines to all its personnel, family and eligible partners, particularly to those belonging to the high risk category groups identified by WHO / SAGE\(^4\) criteria, and within these category groups, at risk workers according to **occupational health and safety principles** as defined by UNMD. All WHO EUL approved vaccines have been proven effective and safe, offering a high level of protection against severe disease and death.

2. To administer an **additional dose** in line with WHO’s recommendation towards immunocompromised individuals, recipients of Sinopharm/Sinovac aged 60+, and all recipients of the Janssen vaccine (Johnson & Johnson)\(^5\) to administer a second dose (between 2 and 6 months after the first dose) per WHO indications that the benefits of a second dose of Janssen vaccine administered are superior to the benefits conferred by one dose.

3. To administer **booster doses** in line with the WHO’s recommendation\(^6\) for a targeted and risk-based approach and UN mandate to preserve its UN personnel capacity to deliver on its programs, prioritizing the most at risk of infection or symptomatic diseases, and following protocols set in place by Local Regulatory Authority, or, if absent, by Stringent Regulatory Authorities\(^7\) such as the US, EMA, the UK, or Australia, provided that the UN is not constrained by limited supply of Covid-19 vaccine\(^8\).

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\(^1\) Please see para 8 in UN FAQs under this link
\(^3\) Regulation and Prequalification (who.int)
\(^5\) Interim recommendations for the use of the Janssen Ad26.COV2.S (COVID-19) vaccine (who.int)
\(^6\) https://www.who.int/news/item/04-10-2021-interim-statement-on-booster-doses-for-covid-19-vaccination
\(^7\) https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-listed-authority-reg-authorities/SRAs
\(^8\) Please see para 6 in UN FAQs under this link
4. To administer homologous or heterologous (mix and match) vaccines series following these general principles (see summary table 1 below for summary of WHO recommended combination):

- Homologous schedules are considered standard practice based on substantial safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy data available for each COVID-19 vaccine with WHO EUL approval.
- SAGE accepts two heterologous doses of WHO EUL COVID-19 vaccines as a complete primary series. A 2-dose series continues to offer high protection against COVID-19 hospitalization and mortality.
- The primary vaccination schedule is a 2-dose series for all WHO EUL approved vaccines. A 3rd dose as part of the primary vaccination series is recommended for immunocompromised persons and persons aged 60+ who received two doses of Sinopharm or Sinovac.
- There is increasing evidence of waning vaccine effectiveness against mild and asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection over time. A booster dose is shown to restore vaccine effectiveness to the same levels as those recorded immediately after the administration of the 2-dose series.
- Booster dose should be administered 4-6 months after last dose. All persons aged 12 or older are eligible to receive a booster dose.
- The available evidence is insufficient to recommend additional booster doses in all groups of population. Subsequent booster shots should be considered following a risk-based approach taking into account individual risk, local epidemiological situation, and recommendations from local and international health authorities.
- The available evidence is insufficient to recommend booster doses in children younger than 12.
- No additional safety concerns have been identified for the use of heterologous schedule (either within the primary series or the booster dose).

Note that specific guidance for the administration of Moderna is provided in Annex A.

Summary table 1
Recommended mix and match combinations (for primary and/or booster schedule)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOSE #1</th>
<th>DOSE #2⁹</th>
<th>DOSE#3 / BOOSTER#2¹⁰</th>
<th>DOSE#4 / BOOSTER#2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mRNA</td>
<td>mRNA</td>
<td>vectored</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mRNA</td>
<td>vectored</td>
<td>mRNA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vectored</td>
<td>vectored</td>
<td>mRNA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vectored</td>
<td>mRNA</td>
<td>mRNA or vectored</td>
<td>mRNA or vectored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inactivated</td>
<td>inactivated*</td>
<td>mRNA or vectored</td>
<td>mRNA or vectored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inactivated</td>
<td>mRNA or vectored</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non WHO EUL</td>
<td>non WHO EUL</td>
<td>Start primary vaccination with WHO EUL¹¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹¹ https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/vaccines/vaccinescovid-19-vaccine-eul-issued
Legend

**mRNA**: Moderna/Pfizer. Moderna half dose if used as booster.

**vectored**: AZ/Janssen

**inactivated**: Sinopharm/Sinovac/Bharat. 3rd dose recommended for age 60+ having received Sinopharm/Sinovac.

**Non WHO EUL**: Sputnik, Soberana, Abdala

**TBC**: To be confirmed

References

- Interim recommendations for the use of the Janssen Ad26.COV2.S (COVID-19) vaccine (who.int)
Annex A: UNMD recommendations for utilization of Moderna vaccine for the UN System-wide vaccination programme

Disclaimer

- This guidance does not imply that Moderna is the only option for booster doses within the context of the COVID-19 vaccination series but refers specifically to situations where the Moderna vaccine is an available option.
- This advice is based on currently available evidence on the possible use of Moderna vaccine either as a primary SARS-COV2 immunization tool or as a mix/match second dose of a primary immunization cycle (heterologous vaccination) or as a booster dose of a completed primary immunization cycle.
- Where scientific evidence of above uses of Moderna vaccine has been judged weak or unavailable, a risk averse peer review process has informed the technical recommendation.
- Homologous vaccination (i.e., same vaccine) schedules are considered standard practice based on substantial safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy data available for each COVID-19 vaccine with WHO EUL approval.
- Heterologous vaccination (i.e., mixed vaccines) with any two WHO EUL approved vaccines\(^\text{12}\) is considered a complete primary series\(^\text{13}\).
- Advice regarding additional dosing for non-WHO EUL COVID-19 vaccines is less well established and should be based on an individual risk assessment.
- As new information will be available, the recommendations presented in this document will be adjusted accordingly.

Rules for use of Moderna

- Moderna as a 1\(^{st}\) dose is full dose (0.5ml).
- Moderna as 2\(^{nd}\) dose (and 3\(^{rd}\) dose for selected immunocompromised individuals) is always full dose 4-8 weeks after the initial dose (8-week interval recommended for mRNA-only primary vaccination to further increase effectiveness and further reduce rare risk of myocarditis\(^\text{14}\)).
- Moderna as booster dose is always half dose (0.25ml) and given 4 to 6 months (or less depending on local health authority policies) after the completion of the last dose.
- Note that for primary immunization with non-WHO EUL approved vaccines a new primary schedule should commence at least 4 weeks after the last dose administered\(^\text{15}\).
- Delay in receiving a dose after the recommended interval does not require additional dose\(^\text{16}\).
- Use in children age 12 and above: Children aged 12 and above can receive the Moderna vaccine as recommended by WHO\(^\text{17}\). As for adults, it is administered in 2 doses of 0.5ml ideally 8 weeks apart.

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\(^\text{12}\) https://www.who.int/groups/strategic-advisory-group-of-experts-on-immunization/covid-19-materials
\(^\text{14}\) https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html
\(^\text{15}\) https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html#foot-04
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine type</th>
<th>Initial schedule</th>
<th>Moderna dose</th>
<th>When to give</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viral vector (Astra Zeneca, Janssen)</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Half</td>
<td>4-6 months(^{18}) after 2(^{nd}) dose</td>
<td>Heterologous vaccine replacement for 3(^{rd}) (booster) dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>4 weeks after 1(^{st}) dose</td>
<td>Heterologous vaccine replacement for 2(^{nd}) and subsequent doses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactivated virus (Sinopharm, Sinovac)</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>half</td>
<td>4-6 months(^{18}) after 2(^{nd}) dose</td>
<td>Normal Moderna ‘booster’ schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>4 weeks after 1(^{st}) dose</td>
<td>Heterologous vaccine replacement for 2(^{nd}) and subsequent doses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mRNA (Moderna, Pfizer)</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Half</td>
<td>4-6 months(^{18}) after 2(^{nd}) dose</td>
<td>Normal Moderna ‘booster’ schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>8 weeks after 1(^{st}) dose</td>
<td>Heterologous/Homologous vaccine replacement for 2(^{nd}) and subsequent doses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein subunit (Novavax)</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Half</td>
<td>4-6 months(^{18}) after 2(^{nd}) dose</td>
<td>Normal Moderna ‘booster’ schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>4 weeks after 1(^{st}) dose</td>
<td>Heterologous vaccine replacement for 2(^{nd}) and subsequent doses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{18}\) Or less depending on local health authority policies
| Non-WHO EUL approved vaccines | Sputnik, Soberana, Abdala | Commence a new primary schedule at least 4 weeks after the last dose administered. |

**Additional references and factsheets:**

- [The Moderna COVID-19 (mRNA-1273) vaccine: what you need to know; WHO](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine; 7 January 2022](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers; 7 January 2022](#)