NEWS BRIEF

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FDA Authorizes Moderna and Johnson & Johnson Booster Shots

On Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized both Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine booster shots.

The agency also authorized the use of "mixing and matching" any of the three available COVID-19 vaccines, including the Pfizer-BioNTech version. In other words, if an individual has received a full dose of one vaccine brand, they can get a booster of a different one.

The independent panel of vaccine experts that advises the FDA recommended the half-dose Moderna booster for older Americans and high-risk individuals six months after being fully vaccinated. This aligns with the Pfizer-BioNTech booster timeline recommendation.

The panel recommended the J&J booster for anyone 18 and older who received that vaccine at least two months ago.

"As the pandemic continues to impact the country, science has shown that vaccination continues to be the safest and most effective way to prevent COVID-19..."

- *FDA Commissioner Dr. Janet Woodcock*

Soon after the Moderna and J&J boosters were authorized by the FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) endorsed the agency's decision. That endorsement effectively paved the way for boosters to be made available to eligible individuals.

What's Next?

Medical experts have urged the public not to seek booster shots unnecessarily. The boosters are primarily meant to help protect people who are at high risk of contracting a serious form of COVID-19.

For the average American, anyone who received two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines is still considered fully vaccinated—the same goes for anyone who received one dose of the J&J vaccine.

Individuals interested in learning more about COVID-19 booster shots should speak with their primary care physician.

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