



**KANAWHA-CHARLESTON  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
108 Lee Street, East /P.O. Box 927  
Charleston, WV 25323-0927  
(304) 344-KCHD (5243)  
kchdvw.org



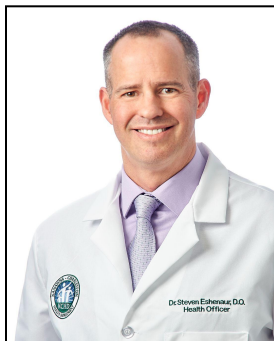
## NEWS RELEASE

May 1, 2023

Contact: Lalena Price, Public Information Officer  
(304) 382-4949; lalena.d.price@wv.gov

### **Kanawha-Charleston Health Department Now Following New Simplified COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule**

CHARLESTON, W.VA. — Following recent changes to the federal protocols for the Omicron COVID-19 vaccines, the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department will now follow the new simplified vaccination schedule for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines.



Dr. Steven Eshenaur, health officer and executive director of the health department, said serious infection from COVID-19 remains a threat for many people and loss of life due to COVID-19 continues in West Virginia. Along with guidance from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources' Bureau for Public Health, Eshenaur is encouraging everyone to stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines to prevent the most severe outcomes, such as hospitalization or death.

“What ‘up to date’ means will be different for us depending on our age and general health,” Eshenaur explained. “Your primary care physician can help guide you, but generally, most people can be up to date on their COVID-19 vaccination by having a single dose of the Omicron vaccine, which is also called the bivalent booster. If you’ve had that injection, you are on track to reduce the impact of the virus should you get it.”

He warned those who have only had the original series of vaccines and not the Omicron booster: “You aren’t as protected as you think as COVID-19 has morphed into the Omicron strain. The Omicron bivalent vaccine does a good job of keeping people out of the hospital and off ventilators. “If you’ve never been on a ventilator, trust me, you don’t want to be. If you’ve been waiting on one shot to get vaccinated against COVID-19, in most cases your wait is over.”

The simplified vaccine schedule is as follows:

- People 65 years and older who have received a single dose of the Omicron, or bivalent vaccine, should receive one additional dose at least four months following their previous dose.
- Individuals aged six years and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised and previously received an Omicron mRNA dose may receive an additional dose at least two months after their last Omicron dose. Beyond that, their healthcare provider should determine the need for additional doses as needed at least two months apart based on the level of immunocompromise for conditions such as stem cell transplant, CAR-T therapy, B-cell depletion, and others.
- The immunocompromised patient determination remains a self-attestation and does not require additional documentation from a physician.
- People who are unvaccinated may receive just a single dose of the Omicron (bivalent) vaccine.
- Individuals who have previously completed their mRNA vaccine primary series and have not yet received a dose of the Omicron vaccine may receive a single dose of the Omicron (bivalent) vaccine.

Children aged six months through four years who are unvaccinated may receive a two-dose series of the Moderna Omicron vaccine or a three-dose series of the Pfizer-BioNTech Omicron vaccine.

- Children five years of age who are unvaccinated may receive two doses of the Moderna Omicron or a single dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech Omicron vaccine.
- Children ages six months through five years who have received one, two or three doses of the monovalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may receive an Omicron vaccine, but the number of doses they receive will depend on the vaccine and their vaccination history.
- Alternatives to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines remain available for people who cannot or will not receive an mRNA vaccine. CDC's recommendations for use of (monovalent) Novavax or Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccines are unchanged.

Representatives of the FDA have said the agency will make decisions about future vaccinations after receiving recommendations on the Fall strain composition this Summer.

KCHD's Clinic is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays except for Tuesdays when it is open until 6 p.m. If you have questions about the new Omicron vaccine schedule or special considerations, please call 304-348-8080.

###