

Pfizer to seek FDA approval of boosters for teens ages 16-17

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(HealthDay)—Pfizer Inc. is expected to seek approval this week for

emergency use of its booster shots among American teens ages 16-17.

Sources familiar with the matter told *The New York Times* that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration could give the [green light](#) in about a week, which would make the Pfizer [booster](#) shot the first one available for people younger than 18.

When asked about plans to expand booster access, a Pfizer spokeswoman told the *Times* an update would be provided when available.

Booster shots of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for everyone 18 and older were authorized about 10 days ago by U.S. health officials. All adults who'd received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine were already eligible for a booster.

The move to expand booster availability would come as President Joe Biden tries to keep Americans calm about Omicron, a new and troubling variant of the coronavirus. On Monday, he called Omicron "a cause for concern, not a cause for panic."

Echoing that concern, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Monday strengthened its recommendations on boosters, urging all Americans aged 18 and older to get the extra dose for the best protection.

"Today, CDC is strengthening its recommendation on booster doses for individuals who are 18 years and older. Everyone ages 18 and older should get a booster shot either when they are 6 months after their initial Pfizer or Moderna series or 2 months after their initial J&J vaccine," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said in an agency statement.

As "scientists in the United States and around the world are urgently

examining vaccine effectiveness related to this [Omicron] variant, I strongly encourage the 47 million adults who are not yet vaccinated to get vaccinated as soon as possible and to vaccinate the children and teens in their families as well, because strong immunity will likely prevent serious illness," Walensky added.

Meanwhile, [vaccine](#) makers are still trying to determine whether their current shots will work as well against the new Omicron variant, or whether modified vaccines will be needed to fight it.

The new variant has yet to be detected in the United States, but U.S. officials have said it is only a matter of time before the new variant surfaces in this country.

More information: Visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for more on [COVID vaccines](#).

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