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TO: California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Providers

FROM: Robert Schechter, M.D., Chief, Immunization Branch 
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SUBJECT: **VFC 2025-2026 COVID-19 Vaccine Ordering**



- ✓ 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccines are now available!
- ✓ Children 6 to 23 months receive either 1 or 2 doses of updated vaccine depending on vaccination history.
- ✓ Children 2 years and older receive 1 dose of updated vaccine.

Background

Updated 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccines are now available for ordering through the VFC Program for VFC-eligible persons 6 months through 18 years of age.

Key updates include:

- To more closely target currently circulating variants, 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccines have been updated to strains based on the Omicron JN.1 lineage of SARS-CoV-2.
 - mRNA vaccines (from Moderna or Pfizer) are based on the LP.8.1 strain of JN.1
 - Protein-based vaccine Nuvaxovid (distributed by Sanofi, manufactured by Novavax) is based on JN.1
- Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine is the only 2025-2026 vaccine for children younger than 5 years old.
- All 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccines are no longer authorized and should not be used.
- The [COVID-19 Vaccine Timing Guide](#) is updated for 2025-2026.

COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance

To help protect children from severe illness, CDPH, in alignment with the American Academy of Pediatrics, [recommends COVID-19](#) vaccines for infants age 6–23 months; children 2–18 years with [risk factors](#) or never vaccinated against COVID-19; and all children whose parent or guardian chooses to protect them. Immunization of children 6 months and older is permitted by ACIP recommendations.

For ages 6 months through 23 months:

- Unvaccinated children should receive 2 doses of updated Moderna Spikevax (pediatric) COVID-19 vaccine.
- Previously vaccinated children should receive 1 or 2 doses of updated Moderna Spikevax (pediatric) COVID-19 vaccine, depending on the number of previous doses.

For ages 2 years and older:

- All children may receive 1 dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine regardless of previous vaccination history.
- For children 2-4 years, only Moderna Spikevax (pediatric) COVID-19 vaccine should be used.
- For children 5-11 years, Pfizer Comirnaty (pediatric) or Moderna Spikevax (pediatric) may be used.
- For children 12 years and older, vaccine options include any mRNA vaccine brand (Pfizer Comirnaty [adolescent/adult], Moderna Spikevax [adolescent/adult]) or Sanofi/Novavax Nuvaxovid [adolescent/adult] vaccine.
- Moderately or severely immunocompromised persons should receive additional doses.
- [Coadministration of COVID-19 vaccine with other routine vaccines](#) is recommended.
- [People with recent SARS-CoV-2 infection](#) may consider delaying a COVID-19 dose by 3 months from symptom onset or positive test (if infection was asymptomatic).

STOCKING COVID-19 VACCINE

To ensure access for any child in your care whose family seeks protection, CDPH strongly encourages VFC providers to order COVID-19 vaccine, even though ordering is not currently required by CDC. COVID-19 vaccines may not be available to your patients at other sites, as most providers will not accept outside patients, and most pharmacies do not immunize young children. Not offering vaccine at your facility may lead to missed or delayed immunization or significant costs to families.

For VFC Eligible Populations

The California VFC program includes COVID-19 vaccines in its Non-Routine Vaccine Availability Plan.

- Providers may opt to order and maintain a minimum number of doses in stock or choose to order doses before a patient's scheduled appointment.
- Providers will not be penalized for any vaccine loss resulting from unused expired or outdated COVID-19 vaccines.

For Non-VFC Eligible Populations

- VFC providers that do not offer COVID-19 vaccines to their patients ineligible for VFC are not required to maintain COVID-19 vaccine for such patients.
- VFC providers offering COVID-19 vaccines for privately insured patients need to separate stock and only use non-VFC doses (private supply) for their patients who are ineligible for VFC. They are not permitted to use VFC stock to immunize patients ineligible for VFC.

COVID-19 VACCINE PRODUCTS

The following COVID-19 vaccines are available for ordering through the VFC Program.

Vaccine Group	Vaccine Name and Packaging	Minimum Order	NDC
6 months - 11 years	SPIKEVAX® (Moderna) Single Dose Prefilled Syringe (25 mcg/0.25 mL) – 10 Per Box	10 doses	80777-0113-80
5 years - 11 years	COMIRNATY™ (Pfizer) Single Dose Vial (10 mcg/0.3mL) – 10 Per Box	10 doses	00069-2501-10
12 years - 18 years	COMIRNATY™ (Pfizer) Single Dose Prefilled Syringe (30 mcg/0.3 mL) – 10 Per Box	10 doses	00069-2528-10 (Comirnaty)
	SPIKEVAX® (Moderna) Single Dose Prefilled Syringe (50 mcg/0.5mL) – 10 Per Box	10 doses	80777-0112-96 (Spikevax)
	Nuvaxovid™ (Sanofi/Novavax) Single Dose Prefilled Syringe (5 mcg/0.5 mL) – 10 Per Box*	10 doses	80631-0207-10 (NUVAXOVID)

*Sanofi is partnering with Novavax on commercialization efforts for Nuvaxovid. Product labels and packaging list Novavax.

Moderna mNEXSPIKE is not offered through VFC.

Storage and Handling

Storage of the updated COVID-19 vaccines **has** changed from the prior formulations. The beyond use date of each product depends on how it is stored.

- **Moderna SPIKEVAX®**

- Freezer - Can be stored in the freezer between -50°C to -15°C (-58°F to 5°F) until expiration date printed on the carton.
- Refrigerator - Can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 60 days or up to the expiration date printed on the carton, whichever comes first.
- May be stored at room temperature, between 8°C to 25°C (46°F to 77°F) for up to 12 hours.

- **Sanofi/Novavax Nuvaxovid™**

- Single-dose prefilled syringes must be stored in the refrigerator at 2°C to 8°C (36°F to 46°F) and may be used until expiry, which is anticipated to be 12/31/2025. Updates from FDA on shelf-life extension are possible.
- DO NOT FREEZE.
- Keep protected from light.
- Discard after single use.

- **Pfizer COMIRNATY™**

- Single-dose vials: If shipped in thermal containers with dry ice, may be stored in ultra-low temperature (ULT) freezer until expiration date printed on cartons and vials.
- Single-dose vials: May be stored in the refrigerator for up to 10 weeks. The 10-week beyond used date should be written on the carton when placed in refrigerator. DO NOT refreeze once thawed.
- Glass prefilled syringes must be refrigerated at 2°C to 8°C (35°F to 46°F) and may be used until expiration date printed on syringe.
- Glass prefilled syringes: DO NOT FREEZE. Discard if frozen.
- Total time at room temperature must not exceed 12 hours for all products.
- Keep protected from exposure to room light and avoid exposure to direct sunlight and ultraviolet light.

Dosage - Administer COVID-19 vaccine as an intramuscular injection.

Moderna

- 6 months through 11 years 25 micrograms/dose
- 12 years and older 50 micrograms/dose

Pfizer

- 5 years through 11 years 10 micrograms/dose
- 12 years and older 30 micrograms/dose

Sanofi/Novavax Nuvaxovid

- 12 years and older 5 micrograms/dose

For details, please refer to the [CDPH COVID-19 Vaccine Product Guide](#).

Administration with Other Vaccines

[COVID-19 vaccines may be administered without regard to timing of other vaccines](#), including on the same day as other vaccines. If multiple vaccines are administered at a single visit, administer each injection in a different injection site. Muscles that may be used for multiple injections include:

- Ages 6 months–2 years: Vastus lateralis of the anterolateral thigh
- Ages ≥3 years: Deltoid

ELIGIBILITY

COVID-19 vaccines made available through the VFC Program may be given only to VFC-eligible patients 18 years of age or younger. Report all doses administered into [CAIR](#) or [Healthy Futures/RIDE](#) per state law (see [AB1797](#)) and the [VFC Provider Agreement](#). VFC funded COVID-19 vaccine doses must be identified with the appropriate VFC Eligibility Funding Category when entering administration information into CAIR.

Patients with private insurance must be given privately purchased vaccines.

VFC VACCINE ORDERING

VFC Providers Are Strongly Encouraged to Order COVID-19 Vaccine

Order Form

Order COVID-19 vaccine on the VFC order form of your myCAVax account, similar to other routine vaccines. For your first order of the 2025-2026 respiratory season, your practice will not be expected to include 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine as on-hand inventory. Any remaining doses of 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine should be returned or wasted. Submit a return form in myCAVax to receive a return shipment label.

Order Frequency

Order enough vaccine that can be used within your routine order frequency. As you decide on how many doses to order, keep in mind that some vaccines may have different

beyond use dates when stored in an ultra-low temperature freezer, in a freezer, or in a refrigerator. Refer to the [COVID-19 Vaccine Product Guide](#) for more information.

COVID-19 Vaccine Brand Preference

Given that there is only one vaccine product for patients 6 months to 4 years of age, and several products for older patients, you may order vaccines from more than one brand or manufacturer to support your VFC-eligible patients.

Supplemental COVID-19 Vaccine Orders

A supplemental order is any order outside of a provider's routine VFC order frequency. Providers may submit a supplemental VFC order for COVID-19 vaccine (and flu vaccine and RSV immunizations if needed) if it is not yet time for their routine order. Low volume providers can order every 3 months, medium volume providers can order every 2 months, and high volume providers can order every month.

Supplemental orders do not require providers to report full usage and inventory for all VFC vaccines if last routine order was within the past:

1. 30 days for low and medium volume providers, in which case only report usage and inventory for the vaccine being requested. If the last order was more than 30 days ago, it is required to report full usage and vaccine inventory to avoid accountability errors.
2. 20 days for high and very-high volume providers.

COVID-19 Vaccine Shipments

Shipping conditions and timeframes will vary by each product.

Moderna Spikevax and Sanofi* Nuvaxovid vaccines are shipped by McKesson. COVID-19 vaccine orders will follow the same shipping timelines for routine vaccines (shipping within about 3 days of order receipt at McKesson).

- Moderna Spikevax vaccines ship frozen between -50°C and -15°C (-58°F and 5°F).
- Sanofi* Nuvaxovid vaccine ships like other routine refrigerated vaccines at temperatures between 2° to 8°C (36° to 46°F).

Pfizer Cominarty vaccines will ship directly from Pfizer (Direct Ship Vaccines). Vaccines will be delivered within 15 days of order receipt by CDC.

- Pfizer Cominarty vaccines 5-11 years will ship from the manufacturer with dry ice and between -90°C and -60°C (-130°F to -76°F).

- Pfizer Cominarty vaccines 12+ years will arrive refrigerated at temperatures between 2° to 8°C (36° to 46°F).

NOTE: Please ensure receiving staff have been properly trained on shipment inspection, dry ice safety and storage in the corresponding units.

Reporting Wasted, Spoiled, Expired Vaccine

Just like with all other routine VFC vaccines, VFC providers are required to account for all COVID-19 vaccine doses ordered on their [myCAvax](#) account, including reporting on-hand inventory and doses administered. Wasted, spoiled, and expired COVID-19 doses must be reported to VFC, and doses reported as expired or spoiled are returned to McKesson Speciality.

Vaccine Storage Considerations

When ordering, ensure that you have enough vaccine storage space to accommodate your routine VFC vaccines, flu vaccine, private-purchase vaccines, and COVID vaccines. Monitor vaccine storage units regularly and purchase additional storage units if capacity cannot accommodate the inventory in a manner consistent with VFC Program requirements (*Provider Agreement Addendum 13G*).

Although not required to purchase, if your practice has an ultra-low temperature (ULT) freezer for storing Pfizer vaccines, please add this storage unit to your myCAvax VFC Program Location account.

Special Event Clinics

Special event clinics, health fairs, special school clinics, and mass vaccination clinics require prior approval from the VFC Program at least 4 weeks before the scheduled event. Frozen vaccines may not be administered off-site. The practice must submit a summary report that includes doses administered within 15 days after the end of the clinic (*Provider Agreement Addendum 15A*). Submit your request to host a special event clinic to your regional [VFC field representative](#).

BILLING FOR VFC COVID-19 VACCINES

Medi-Cal Fee-For-Service (FFS)

To bill Medi-Cal FFS for administration of VFC-supplied COVID-19 vaccine doses, use the appropriate CPT-4 code, followed by the “-SL” modifier (e.g., for Moderna 6 months-11 years, Medi-Cal FFS billing code is 91321-SL). For billing codes and more information on the COVID-19 vaccine products, refer to the updated [COVID-19 Vaccine Product Guide](#). Providers will only be reimbursed for the administration fee when using VFC vaccines for Medi-Cal FFS-eligible patients.

For specific information and details on Medi-Cal billing, please refer to the [Medi-Cal provider manual on VFC](#). Providers with questions on Medi-Cal billing policies and procedures and Provider manual information may call the Telephone Service Center (TSC) at 1-800-541-5555.

Medi-Cal Managed Care

Please contact the specific Medi-Cal managed care health plan for information on immunization billing and reimbursement.

REPORTING VACCINE ADMINISTRATION TO CAIR

All active participants of California's VFC Program are required to enter all vaccine doses administered into CAIR or RIDE, in accordance with [AB 1797](#), and as indicated in the VFC Provider Participation Agreement. Please make sure all doses administered are reported into a California immunization registry ([CAIR](#) or [Healthy Futures/RIDE](#)) AND the appropriate VFC Eligibility category is recorded.

Please ensure CAIR Accepted Values for VFC Eligibility Funding Status are reported with your clinic's data exchange information when documenting vaccine administration in the clinic's electronic medical record system and exchanging information with CAIR or Healthy Futures.

Refer patients to the [California Digital Vaccine Record \(DVR\) portal](#) to request copies of their vaccination record. Information is available in multiple languages.

Resources

- [VFC Vaccine Eligibility Screening and Documentation Guidelines](#)
- [VFC Resolutions](#)
- [CDPH Public Health for All Webpage](#)
- [EZIZ COVID-19 Vaccine Resources](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Interim Clinical Considerations](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Product Guide](#)