



衛生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection

**Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases
and
Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases**

**Consensus Interim Recommendations on the
Use of COVID-19 Vaccines in Hong Kong
(As of 20 February 2024)**

On 20 February 2024, the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (SCEZD) under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (JSC) discussed and updated the interim recommendations related to the use of COVID-19 vaccines, in view of the emergence of the Omicron JN.1 variant in Hong Kong.

Choice of COVID-19 vaccine

2. The latest local surveillance data showed that the Omicron JN.1 variant has become the most prevalent variant in Hong Kong. However, the current evidence did not suggest Omicron JN.1 variant was associated with a more severe disease than the previous prevalent Omicron XBB variant and its descendant lineages.

3. The JSC reiterated the importance of COVID-19 vaccination in preventing severe disease for those at risk, and hence urged individuals in high-risk priority groups to receive a dose of COVID-19 vaccine as early as possible.



4. Early vaccine effectiveness studies showed that the monovalent XBB.1.5 mRNA vaccines could provide enhanced protection during the period when Omicron JN.1 variant was co-circulating with other Omicron variants.

5. Eligible individuals should consider opting for the monovalent XBB.1.5 mRNA vaccine for initial and booster vaccination. Individuals may still choose other COVID-19 vaccines for both initial and booster vaccination for personal reasons.

Booster vaccination for year 2024

6. The October 2023 JSC recommendations on the definition of high-risk priority groups¹ for COVID-19 vaccination as well as timing for receiving a booster dose (i.e. at least six months since the last dose or infection, whichever is later) remain valid for year 2024.

7. It should be noted that this recommendation on booster vaccination for year 2024 should not be positioned as an annual or regular COVID-19 vaccination.

8. JSC will continue to monitor and review the local epidemiology of COVID-19, scientific development on COVID-19 vaccines, WHO recommendations and overseas practice to provide updated recommendations as necessary regarding the use of COVID-19 vaccines.

February 2024

The copyright of this paper belongs to the Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Contents of the paper may be freely quoted for educational, training and non-commercial uses provided that acknowledgement be made to the Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. No part of this paper may be used, modified or reproduced for purposes other than those stated above without prior permission obtained from the Centre.

¹ High-risk priority groups comprising (i) Persons aged 50 years and above including those living in residential care homes, (ii) Persons aged 18 to 49 years with underlying comorbidities, (iii) Persons with immunocompromising conditions aged 6 months and above, (iv) Pregnant women (once during each pregnancy), and (v) Healthcare workers.