

German panel recommends booster for recipients of 4 vaccines

March 31 2022



Photo shows a 85-year-old man receiving a booster vaccination in the so called "vaccination express" tram in central Frankfurt, Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst,file

Germany's independent vaccination advisory panel is recommending a booster shot with a messenger RNA vaccine for people who have had a full course of four Chinese, Indian and Russian COVID-19 vaccines that aren't currently approved for use in the European Union.

In a draft recommendation Thursday, the panel, known by its German acronym STIKO, said the advice applies to people given a full course and also a booster of the Chinese Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines, the Indian-made Covaxin and Russia's Sputnik V.

It said that the new booster shot should be administered at least three months after the previous vaccination.

The German panel said that people who have received only a single shot of the four vaccines should start a new vaccination series.

And it added that recipients of other vaccines not cleared by the EU should in general start a new series with a vaccine European authorities have approved.

Scientists believe that mixing and matching vaccines prompts a better immune response.

The BioNTech-Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines have been the mainstay of Germany's vaccination program. Three other vaccines using different technologies have been cleared for use in the 27-nation EU—the AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson and Novavax products.

The mRNA vaccines have shown to be better than others at protecting against newer variants like omicron.

Separately, efforts to find a majority in the German parliament for a bill that would require all adults to be vaccinated against COVID-19 have

reportedly stalled.

German publications Bild and Der Spiegel reported that talks between parties haven't resulted in the necessary support, and lawmakers may now focus on a vaccine mandate for residents age 50 and over.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz declined Thursday to comment on the reports but said he continues to back the idea of a vaccine mandate for all adults.

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Citation: German panel recommends booster for recipients of 4 vaccines (2022, March 31) retrieved 25 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-03-german-panel-booster-recipients-vaccines.html>

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