

EU urges second COVID-19 boosters for people ages 60 to 79

July 11 2022, By MIKE CORDER



People queue to get vaccinated against COVID-19 on the first day of a new vaccination center in Lisbon, Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021. The European Union said Monday, July 11, 2022 it is “critical” that authorities in the 27-nation bloc consider giving second coronavirus booster shots to people between the ages of 60 and 79 years and other vulnerable people, as a new wave of the pandemic sweeps over the continent. Credit: AP Photo/Armando Franca, File

The European Union said Monday it's "critical" that authorities in the 27-nation bloc consider giving second coronavirus booster shots to people between the ages of 60 and 79 years and other vulnerable people, as a new wave of the pandemic sweeps over the continent.

"With cases and hospitalizations rising again as we enter the summer period, I urge everybody to get vaccinated and boosted as quickly as possible. There is no time to lose," European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides said in a statement.

The European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency said that the second boosters can be given at least four months after the first [booster](#).

Monday's advice comes after the agencies in April recommended that people over age 80 be considered for a second booster.

"As a new wave is currently underway in Europe, with increasing rates of hospital and intensive care unit admissions, it is critical that public health authorities now consider people between 60 and 79 as well as vulnerable persons of any age for a second booster," the agencies said in a statement.

ECDC Director Andrea Ammon said that the new wave is being driven by the highly transmissible BA.5 mutation of the omicron variant of the coronavirus.

"This signals the start of a new, widespread COVID-19 wave across the European Union," she said. "There are still too many individuals at risk of severe COVID-19 infection whom we need to protect as soon as possible. We need to remind people of the importance of vaccination from the very first shot to the second booster. We have to start today."

The agencies said that at the moment there is "no clear evidence to support giving a second booster dose to people below 60 years of age who are not at higher risk of severe disease." There also is no immediate need to give second boosters to [health care workers](#) or those working in long-term care homes unless they are at high risk, they added.

Monday's advice from the EU comes as scientists worry about [a new omicron mutant](#)—called BA2.75—that is gaining ground in India and popping up in other countries.

Scientists say the new variant may be able to spread rapidly and get around immunity from vaccines and previous infection. It's unclear whether it could cause more serious disease than other omicron variants, including the globally prominent BA.5.

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