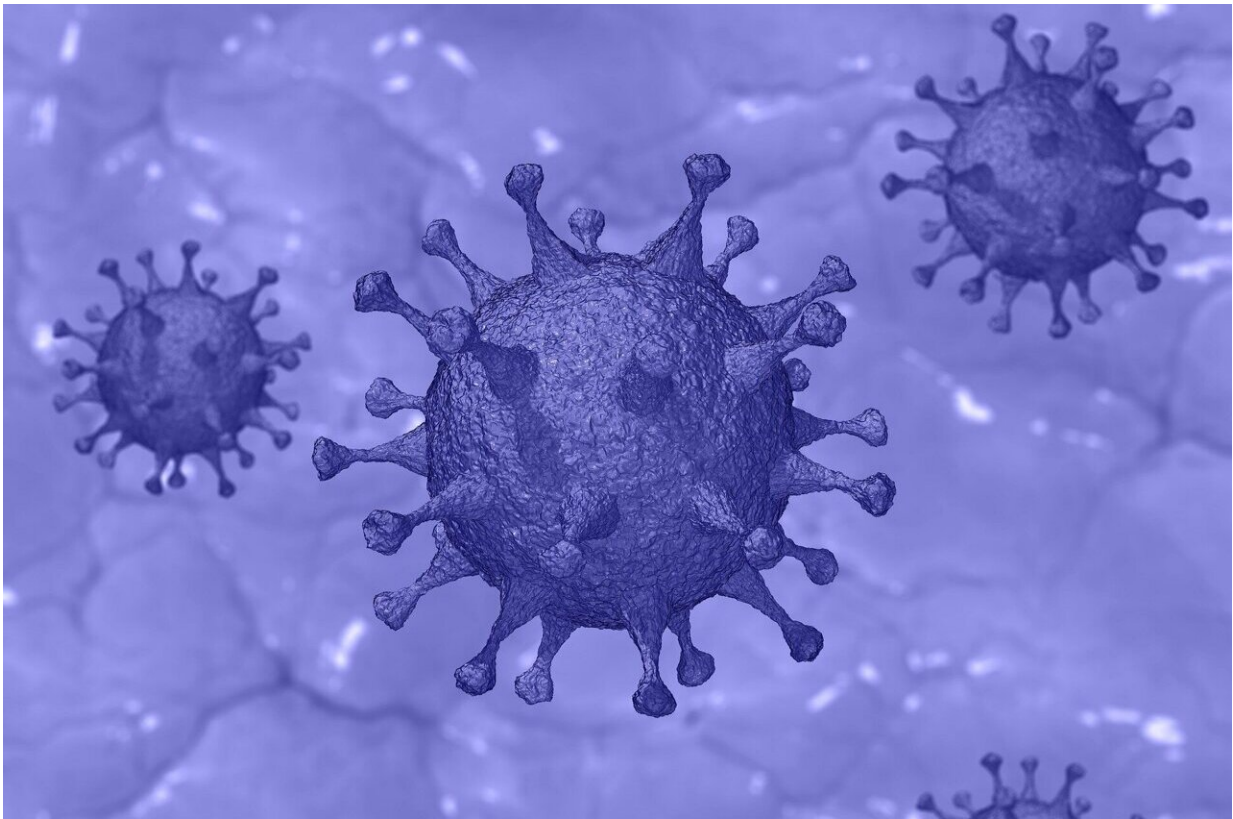


# EU recommends elderly get priority for Omicron jabs

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Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

EU health authorities on Tuesday recommended that older people and high-risk patients should be first in line for updated COVID-19 vaccines targeting the Omicron variant.

Pregnant women and care home workers should also be prioritised, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said in a joint statement.

Ahead of a winter booster campaign, the EMA last week approved "bivalent" jabs by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna which target both the original COVID virus and the BA.1 subvariant of Omicron.

"The ECDC and EMA advise that these boosters be directed as a priority to people who are more at risk of progressing to [severe disease](#) because of certain [risk factors](#)," the EU agencies said.

These included people aged 60 and above, the immunocompromised, people with other underlying conditions putting them at risk of severe COVID, and [pregnant women](#), they said.

Care home workers should also get priority and healthcare workers "may also be considered due to their increased exposure in case of future new waves".

The EU agencies said the original jabs should be used for people having their first vaccinations and where adapted boosters are not available, as they are "still effective against severe disease, hospitalisation and death".

The vaccines currently in circulation target the initial strain of the virus that first appeared in Wuhan, China, but have gradually proven to be less effective against the variants that have evolved over time.

In contrast to the Alpha and Delta variants, which eventually waned, Omicron and its subvariants have come to dominate infections worldwide in 2022.

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