

Update for Health Services Staff on Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) Vaccine Recommendations

CDC recently released a [statement](#) endorsing the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) guidance that expresses a clinical preference for individuals to receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine over Johnson & Johnson's (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine. The recommendation is based on the latest evidence on vaccine effectiveness, vaccine safety and rare adverse events, and consideration of the abundant mRNA vaccine supply in the United States.

Based on an updated [risk-benefit analysis](#) of the Janssen vaccine, particularly the concern surrounding thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS), use of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (Moderna or Pfizer) is preferred over the Janssen vaccine for vaccine-eligible persons. Vaccine providers are recommended to begin the two-dose mRNA COVID-19 vaccine series even if there is uncertainty about how the patient will receive their second dose; setting alone should not be a reason to offer the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. **We anticipate that most BOP inmates would be appropriate for an mRNA vaccine for primary and booster vaccination.**

However, ACIP reaffirmed that receiving any vaccine is better than being unvaccinated, and there are certain situations and subpopulations for which the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine may be offered:

- When there is a contraindication to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (e.g., severe allergic reaction after a previous dose or to a component of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine)
- When a person would otherwise remain unvaccinated for COVID-19 due to limited access to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.
- When a person wants to receive the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine despite the safety concerns identified.

Providers are responsible for educating staff and inmates about the risks and benefits of COVID-19 vaccines. All persons who elect to receive a Janssen COVID-19 vaccine booster should be informed about the risk and symptoms of TTS that could occur after vaccination (typically within 2 weeks after receipt), and the need to seek immediate medical care should any of the following symptoms develop:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Leg swelling
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Severe or persistent headaches or blurred vision
- Easy bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the site of the injection.

Additional information for providers can be found at [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#). Offering the Janssen vaccine should be considered only after the patient's medical needs have been established through sound clinical judgement.

The consent form for both staff and inmates has been updated to include language supporting the preferred use of mRNA vaccines whenever feasible.