

Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Talking Points

December 16, 2021

On Thursday, December 16, the CDC recommended that **mRNA COVID-19 vaccines** (i.e., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines) **are preferred over the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19 for all people age 18 years or older**. This recommendation applies to **both primary series and booster doses**.

The NYSDOH recommends that vaccine recipients registered for and/or requesting Janssen COVID-19 vaccine be counseled on the following points:

- There is a **rare but serious risk of thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) following Janssen COVID-19 vaccine**. This condition causes blood clots in the brain, abdomen and/or legs and low platelet counts, typically 1-2 weeks after receiving the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.
- Although a risk of TTS was previously reported this summer, ongoing vaccine safety surveillance has now found **higher rates of TTS than those previously reported**. The updated estimated rates of TTS following Janssen COVID-19 vaccine are:
 - Among women: 5.8 cases of TTS per million doses of Janssen COVID-19 vaccine
 - Women age 30-49 years had the highest reported rate of TTS: 9.8 cases per million doses of Janssen COVID-19 vaccine
 - Among men: 2.2 cases per million doses of Janssen COVID-19 vaccine
- TTS is **severe**: All reported U.S. TTS cases were hospitalized, two-thirds were admitted to ICU, and 8 people (15%) died of TTS
- TTS has also been reported in Europe following receipt of the **AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine**, which is similar to the Janssen vaccine.
- **TTS has not been reported after mRNA COVID-19 vaccines**, despite intense vaccine safety monitoring.
- **New Yorkers have a choice of COVID-19 vaccines**, and persons who registered for Janssen COVID-19 vaccine but no longer wish to receive it may choose to receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Any COVID-19 vaccine is better than being unvaccinated**. The benefits of Janssen COVID-19 vaccine still exceed potential risks of vaccination. Most people who are unwilling or unable to receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may still receive the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine at clinics offering it.
- However, **people who had TTS following the Janssen or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine should not receive additional doses of these vaccines**. These individuals may receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine when they are due for a booster dose.
- People who receive the Janssen vaccine should **seek medical attention right away** if they have any of the following symptoms:
 - 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 injection.

Resources

- CDC Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines – Considerations for Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html#considerations-Janssen
- Janssen EUA Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers: www.fda.gov/media/146304/download
- Janssen EUA Fact Sheet for Vaccine Recipients www.fda.gov/media/146305/download