



Authority	Honourable Minister of Health
Type	Decision
Number	07
Category	COVID-19: vaccination
Start date	1 February 2022

DECISION 07. COVID-19 VACCINES INTERVAL BETWEEN DOSES, NUMBER OF DOSES, BOOSTERS, MIX AND MATCH SCHEDULES AND ELIGIBLE AGES

I, Mr Silas Bule Melve, Minister of Health, by virtue of the Public Health Act [Cap. 234] and amendments thereof, and all other enabling powers, hereby confirm the following decision:

1. The Ministry of Health administers WHO Emergency Use Listed (EUL) vaccines against COVID-19 in accordance with WHO recommendations to ensure quality, safety and efficacy. This includes adherence to the number of doses, interval between doses, extended series, boosters and eligible ages, as recommended by WHO.
2. The primary series for vaccines against COVID-19 currently in use in Vanuatu are:
 - a. AstraZeneca: for people aged 18 years and over, two doses with an interval of 8 to 12 weeks between the two doses.
 - b. Sinopharm: for people aged 18 years and over, two doses with an interval of 3 to 4 weeks between the two doses.
 - c. Janssen Ad26.COV2.S: for people aged 18 years and over, one dose.
3. The primary series for vaccines against COVID-19 being considered for use in Vanuatu are:
 - a. Moderna: for people aged 12 years and over, two doses with an interval of 4 weeks between the two doses.
 - b. Pfizer-BioNTech: for people aged 12 years and over, two doses with an interval of 3 to 4 weeks between the two doses.

4. After receiving the final dose of a primary series of a WHO EUL vaccine against COVID-19, a person is considered fully vaccinated after either:
 - a. 14 days if receiving a vaccine product with two recommended doses; or
 - b. 28 days if receiving a vaccine product with one recommended dose.
5. A shortened interval between doses may reduce efficacy and immunogenicity compared to a longer interval. Therefore, to be considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 the WHO recommended minimum dose intervals must be adhered for persons receiving doses in Vanuatu.
6. If administration of the second dose is delayed beyond the maximum recommended dose interval, it should be given at the earliest possible opportunity.
7. Emerging evidence suggests that older persons and immunocompromised individuals mount a lower immune response after a standard primary series compared to others. Therefore, an additional third dose may be accessed at 5 months after the final dose of a primary series (to be considered an extended primary series) for adults 55 years and over and immunocompromised persons including those with underlying conditions.
8. Booster doses are administered to a vaccinated population that has completed a primary vaccination series when, with time, vaccine effectiveness has fallen below a rate deemed sufficient in that population. Some evidence suggests that COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness wanes over time. The current priority in Vanuatu is to complete the primary series for all eligible persons. However, 5 months after the final dose of a primary series a single booster dose may be administered for those at highest risk of exposure to COVID-19, including healthcare workers and other frontline workers. Boosters for the general population may be considered at a later date as deemed a priority, such as once a high proportion of the eligible population is fully vaccinated with the primary series.
9. Heterologous priming schedules (also known as mix and match schedules) for vaccines against COVID-19 use a second dose with a different vaccine product than the first dose. At this stage the evidence on the safety and efficacy of mix and match schedules is limited. Therefore, completion of the primary vaccine schedule with one vaccine product is required to be considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 for those receiving doses in Vanuatu. Those who have completed their primary series and will received an extended extended series or booster dose should receive the same vaccine product as for the primary series, unless otherwise directed by the Ministry of Health.

10. Changes to dose intervals, eligible ages, extended series doses, booster doses or mix and match schedules for vaccines against COVID-19 can be expected based on revisions to WHO recommendations, and will be implemented and communicated as per national priorities and at the discretion of the Minister of Health and the Health Emergency Advisory Committee.
11. Those who intend to travel overseas should check in advance the relevant COVID-19 travel and vaccination requirements and allow sufficient time to ensure recognised full vaccination if this is a requirement of travel or entry.

This Decision comes into effect on 1 February 2022 and shall remain valid during the period of the Public Health Emergency for COVID-19, or as amended in writing by the Minister of Health or the Health Emergency Advisory Committee based on the evolving situation. This decision replaces any other previous decision or decisions by the same authority regarding the same topic.

Signed



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Honourable Silas Bule Melve
Minister of Health

Dated

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14 February 2022