New Booster Requirement for Spring 2022

December 17, 2021

On Friday, December 17, 2021, the university announced a new vaccination requirement for the spring 2022 semester stating that all students who are eligible will be required to receive boosters before returning to campus for the spring semester. Additionally, all faculty and staff are expected to receive boosters as soon as they become eligible. Please read the full message below from Dr. Spangler for details.

Dear Members of the Yale Community,

I am writing today with updates and important information about a new vaccination requirement. Infections with COVID-19 continue to rise in the state and across much of the nation. On our campus, numbers of infections remain high with no evidence of workplace or classroom transmission.

While most infections in Connecticut continue to be associated with the Delta variant, cases associated with the Omicron variant are rising rapidly and have emerged in our Yale community. Studies increasingly indicate that Omicron is much more easily transmitted than the Delta variant and may be more resistant to vaccines than earlier variants. It is therefore extremely important that we continue to follow all of our health and safety measures [1] and exercise caution when traveling and attending social gatherings.

New booster requirement

The promising news is that boosters of currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines not only bolster waning immunity to the Delta variant but also appear to provide protection from becoming ill with the Omicron variant. Given these findings in the context of the current surge of infections, university leaders have decided that all students who are eligible will be required to receive boosters before returning to campus for the spring semester.
Additionally, all faculty and staff are expected to receive boosters as soon as they become eligible. Here is some additional information:

- Our data indicates that the vast majority of students, faculty, and staff are currently eligible to receive boosters (6 months or more from their primary Pfizer or Moderna vaccination series or 2 months or more from their Johnson and Johnson vaccination). The Yale COVID-19 vaccine program will increase booster appointments through December 22 so that those who wish to receive boosters before traveling over recess can do so. Boosters are widely available throughout the holiday break at many sites across the state and the country.

- We understand that there will be a small number of students who will not yet be eligible for boosters at the start of the semester. Those students may return to campus but must receive their boosters within 7 days of becoming eligible.

- Previously approved medical and religious COVID-19 vaccination exemptions will be honored with regard to the booster requirement.

- You may confirm or submit your booster information by visiting the student or employee vaccine portal. When in the portal, click on “Immunization” and select the “COVID-19 Booster” blue bar. If you see the date of your booster and “Verified,” your booster vaccination is already submitted and no further action is necessary. If it is not listed, you must enter your booster date and upload your vaccination record by following these instructions.

- If you need assistance or have questions about boosters, you may contact the Campus COVID Resource Line at 203-432-6604 (7 days a week from 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM).

Additional COVID-19 updates

- Yesterday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued their clinical preference that individuals receive an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) rather than the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. This recommendation followed a review of relative vaccine effectiveness, safety, and rare adverse events.

- Earlier this month, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists issued a strong recommendation that “all eligible individuals—especially those who are considering pregnancy, pregnant, recently pregnant, and lactating—to be vaccinated against COVID-19.”

- Dr. Madeline Wilson recently issued COVID-19 winter recess testing guidance for all students. This information may also be helpful for faculty and staff.

I know that many of us looked forward to a holiday season free of COVID-19 concerns. Unfortunately, the pandemic is still with us, and we must continue our vigilance. I hope that you find the guidance provided here and in recent messages helpful in planning holiday activities and that you will find rest, peace, and enjoyment in the days ahead.

Stephanie S. Spangler, M.D.
Vice Provost for Health Affairs and Academic Integrity
Clinical Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences
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University COVID-19 Coordinator

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[10] https://view.message.yale.edu/?qs=4a2cea8b904b02ce317a7d3635defcfa56064e3a46eb41a83dd820c2d471348969e0ca9dd23b55d6634e739d011e64607186e760bde921383bfbee449643560e3e5e89592d9b6c78980a95b3cd321ef
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