

Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer
Department of Health
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21 December 2021

cc Dr Colette Bonner DCMO
Dr Ronan Glynn DCMO
Dr Siobhán O’Sullivan Chief Bioethicist
Ms Pauline Brady CMO Office

Re: Recommendation regarding the interval between laboratory-confirmed breakthrough infection and an additional or booster COVID-19 vaccination

Dear Dr. Holohan,

NIAC recommends that an additional or booster dose should be delayed for at least three months after diagnosis of laboratory-confirmed SARS COV-2 infection. This updates the [prior recommendation](#) to delay additional or booster vaccination for at least six months following infection.

The reasons for this recommendation are:

- Prior estimation of duration of immunity following infection was based on infection with less immune evasive variants.
- As the Omicron variant is spreading rapidly, there is an urgent need to give people booster vaccinations as soon as possible.
- Immunity following the Omicron variant may wane more rapidly than that following previous variants, as demonstrated by significantly higher reinfection rates.
- Whilst natural infection acts as a booster, the duration of this effectiveness against the Omicron variant is uncertain.
- Booster doses of an mRNA vaccine have been shown to significantly increase vaccine effectiveness against the Omicron variant.
- There are no indications of any new safety concerns related to additional or booster vaccination, although data are limited.
- Providing an earlier additional or booster vaccine to those with laboratory-confirmed breakthrough infection more than three months previously may ensure that their protection is optimised during this period of high community transmission.

NIAC will continue to closely monitor relevant safety and effectiveness data and will update this advice as necessary. All other existing recommendations apply.

Yours sincerely,

Karina Butler
Imc 03054

Professor Karina Butler
Chair, National Immunisation Advisory Committee