



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on December 22, 2021

Israel to Offer Fourth COVID Shot to “High-risk” Groups

First in the world, Israel is set to administer a fourth COVID vaccine dose for citizens aged 60 and older and other “at-risk” groups, with Prime Minister Naftali Bennett urging residents to get the shot ahead of formal approval.

According to [The Times of Israel](#), a government body called the Pandemic Treatment Staff (PTS) recommended that medical personnel, adults over the age of 60, and immunocompromised individuals get the fourth dose after waiting at least four months since the third dose.



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While the decision requires final approval from the Health Ministry director-general to go into effect, unconfirmed reports said the rollout would begin Sunday, December 26.

The research on the fourth dose’s safety and efficacy are being carried out at the Sheba Medical Center at Tel HaShomer and is yet to be published.

The hospital added that it is conducting a study of the dose’s feasibility on some 200 volunteers, examining the effect on antibody levels. That trial is said to be first of its kind in the world, and because of its importance, it is being conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

While the medical diagnosis of the volunteers ranged from HIV to leukemia, head of Sheba Medical Center’s Infectious Disease Unit and a member of PTS Professor Galia Rahav shared some “exciting news” on the dose generating a good immune response in vast majority of the patients.

It is unclear how much time was spent on the trials, but likely not too much, since the county first started [administering](#) a third dose to the “at-risk” groups only on August 1, which is less than five months ago.

The dissenting members of the panel have raised those concerns during the debate.

[Reportedly](#), one of them was the country’s public health chief, Sharon Alroy-Preis, who was against the fourth dose because the trials have not been concluded yet.

To that, Rahav responded that giving the selected cohorts the fourth shot was a “calculated risk” in the context of the rapidly spreading Omicron strain.

Prime Minister Bennett applauded the recommendation and ordered preparations for the speedy rollout.

“This is wonderful news which will help us to overcome the Omicron wave that is now flooding the world,” Bennett [said](#) in a statement. “The State of Israel will continue to stand at the forefront of the global response to the pandemic. Israeli citizens were the first in the world to receive a third vaccine dose, and we are continuing to lead with the fourth round of vaccinations.”

Bennett continued, “I call on all those who are eligible according to the criteria established by the taskforce to go and get vaccinated.”



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The PM even took to [Twitter](#) to spread the word: “As we did with the booster in the delta surge, we intend to be active and groundbreaking, and do everything to win.” He added, “The world will follow us.”

“There’s no need to wait, go get vaccinated,” echoed Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz. “It is the most effective measure against the corona.”

The news came just one day after Israel’s Cabinet [voted](#) to ban Israelis from traveling to the United States, Canada, and eight other countries over the fears of the Omicron surge.

On Tuesday, Israel’s coronavirus cabinet also approved new [restrictions](#), including banning the unvaccinated and those who failed to receive their third dose in a timely manner from even more “non-essential” businesses and limiting capacities of such public venues as shopping malls. In addition to that, classes at the public elementary schools where less than 70 percent of pupils are vaccinated will move to online instruction in the communities with substantial infection rates.

As the booster campaign was gradually extended to include more age groups back in August, Horowitz [warned](#) that the government might cancel the so-called [Green Pass](#) of people not inoculated with three doses of the coronavirus vaccine. Such a pass is required to access such public venues as cultural and sporting events, restaurants, cafes, gyms, hotels, and movie theaters, regardless of the number of participants or the number of people present there. Horowitz explained:

This is simply because, in terms of its effectiveness, the vaccine is valid only for a period of five or six months. After about half a year, you have to get a third dose. Otherwise, the vaccine loses its power. The Green Pass testifies that a person is safe in a certain way. So the moment we know that the vaccine loses its effectiveness after a certain period, there’s no justification for giving a Green Pass to someone who hasn’t gotten another dose.

Getting a booster shot five months after a second dose would extend the expiration of a Green Pass by another six months, per the minister. Therefore, if the trajectory of the pandemic continues, it is probable Israelis age of 12 and up will have to receive COVID boosters twice a year or lose their access to a “normal life,” as *The New American* has previously [reported](#).

Notably, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has quietly [updated](#) its guidance, recommending immunocompromised adults receive a fourth dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID shots six months after receiving their third dose — “as research shows people with compromised immune systems don’t mount an adequate immune response following vaccination.” That practice, however, has neither been studied for safety or efficacy nor approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the CDC’s vaccine-safety advisors.

Some experts warn against repeated COVID revaccinations. Dr. Peter McCullough, a world-renowned cardiologist, [explained](#) that due to the widespread memory-type antibody response to SARS-CoV-2, the antibodies induced by the COVID vaccines can bring about the destruction of any cell that manufactures the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, particularly in circulation, with the risk of adverse effects increasing with every consequent dose taken.



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