

Extension of measures against the spread of COVID-19 — A booster dose available for people over 50 and for individuals with severe obesity

Decisions of the Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers decided the extension of the measures against the spread of COVID-19, as well as the extension of the age limit for the administration of a booster dose of the vaccine to people over 50 and to people with severe obesity, following a proposal presented, today, by the Minister of Health, Mr Michalis Hadjipantela.

The Council of Ministers has studied the epidemiological data as developed in recent days, and has taken into account the fact that the scientific community in Cyprus and internationally urges for great caution in the coming period to avoid so as to avoid a further outbreak. As Mr Hadjipantela pointed out, in many European countries there is already a deterioration in the epidemiological picture, which forces states to reintroduce strict restrictive measures.

Based on these data, but also in order to allow time for monitoring and re-evaluation of the epidemiological picture, the Council of Ministers **approved the extension of the existing measures until 2 December 2021.**

In addition, following a recommendation by the majority of the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee, the Council of Ministers approved the recommendation **to reduce the age limit for the administration of a booster dose to individuals aged 50 and over**, provided that six months have elapsed since the initial vaccination scheme was completed. According to the data, the view that gradually the administration of the booster dose should be extended to the general population is reinforced, as it is observed that over a certain period of time after the completion of the initial vaccination scheme, immunity declines and there is a gradual decrease in the effectiveness of the vaccine against disease and hospitalization.

Finally, the Council of Ministers approved the proposal for inclusion, among vulnerable groups with priority for receiving a booster dose, of people with severe obesity (persons with BMI > 40, or BMI \geq 35 and metabolic syndrome) regardless of age, who were vaccinated in the first phase of the National Vaccination Programme. A prerequisite for receiving a booster dose of the vaccine is that a period of six months should have elapsed since the initial vaccination was completed.

It is clarified that the Ministry of Health will announce, in the following days, the procedure to be followed for the administration of the booster dose to individuals aged 50 and over and to people with severe obesity.

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