

WHO says there's no evidence healthy children and adolescents need Covid boosters

KEY POINTS

- The World Health Organization (WHO) Chief Scientist Dr. Soumya Swaminathan said Tuesday, January 18, 2022 that “there’s no evidence right now” that suggests healthy children and adolescents need booster shots to supplement their Covid-19 vaccinations.
- Swaminathan said the agency’s advisory group meet later this week to consider how countries should think about giving booster shots.



World Health Organization (WHO) Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan attends a press conference organised by the Geneva Association of United Nations Correspondents (ACANU) amid the COVID-19 outbreak, caused by the novel coronavirus, at the WHO headquarters in Geneva Switzerland July 3, 2020. -Fabrice Coffrini | Reuters

There’s “no evidence right now” that suggests healthy children and adolescents need booster shots to supplement their Covid-19 vaccinations, World Health Organization Chief Scientist Dr. Soumya Swaminathan said Tuesday.

Swaminathan said the agency’s advisory group, called Sage, or the [Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization](#), will meet later this week to consider how countries should think about giving booster shots.

“The aim is to protect the most vulnerable, to protect those at highest risk of severe disease and dying, those are our elderly population, immunocompromised with underlying conditions and also health care workers,” Swaminathan said in a [WHO media briefing](#).

Dr. Michael Ryan, Executive Director, WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, said the agency still hasn't figured out how often or how many doses people will ultimately need.

"I think people do have a certain fear out there that this booster thing is going to be like every two or three months and everyone's going to have to go and get a booster. And I don't think we have the answer to that yet," Ryan said.

He said scientists may eventually redefine how many doses are required in the primary series of Covid shots. While most healthy people may need just two shots, he said the elderly or immunocompromised may need three or four.

Swaminathan's and Ryan's comments come roughly two weeks after the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approved booster shots for adolescents aged 12 to 17 amid the current surge in coronavirus cases due to the highly contagious omicron variant.

The surge has also led to a sharp rise in pediatric cases. For the week ending Jan. 6, 2022 more than 580,000 child coronavirus cases were reported, marking a 78% increase from the week ending Dec. 30, according to the last updated data from American Academy of Pediatrics. **-cnbc.com, 18/1/2022**