

EU watchdog soon to rule on boosters for teens aged 16, 17

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The EU's medicines regulator said Thursday it would soon rule on an application to approve Pfizer/BionTech's COVID-19 booster shots for teens aged 16 and 17, with younger ages expected to follow.

The European Medicines Agency in October approved Comirnaty booster jabs for all people aged 18 and older, followed by a similar decision to back Moderna's Spikevax shortly afterwards.

"The EMA is currently evaluating an application to extend the use of the booster dose of Comirnaty to adolescents aged 16 and 17," said Marco Cavaleri, the EMA's head of vaccines strategy.

"We also expect to shortly receive a similar application for a booster dose of Comirnaty in 12 to 15-year-olds," he told a bi-weekly EMA online press conference.

Cavaleri stressed that vaccination—and in particular [booster](#) jabs—"remained the best form of protection against serious illness from the Omicron variant".

Cavaleri added however it was unlikely that there would be a decision to approve two vaccines produced by French firms Valneva and Sanofi Pasteur—both currently under rolling review—before Easter.

He warned of the emergence of sub-variants of the highly-contagious Omicron strain, but added "it was too early to say how much these variants differ from Omicron".

The World Health Organisation said Tuesday that a sub-variant of Omicron has been detected in 57 countries.

The WHO said that Omicron, the fast-spreading and heavily-mutated strain that accounts for over 93 percent of all coronavirus specimens collected, in the past month counted several sub-lineages: BA.1, BA.1.1 BA.2 and BA.3.

The UN health agency too stressed that little was known yet about the

differences between the sub-variants, and called for studies into its characteristics.

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