

National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI)

March 27, 2021

In news: Recently, Centre asked States/UTs to increase the interval between two doses of COVISHIELD to 4-8 weeks based on NTAGI and NEGVAC Recommendation

About National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI)

- **Establishment:** It was established by an order of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) in 2001.
- As India's apex advisory body on immunization, the NTAGI provides guidance and advice to the MoHFW on provision of vaccination and immunization services for the effective control of vaccine preventable diseases in the country.
- NTAGI of India fulfils a need for informing decision-making concerning the introduction of new vaccines and strengthening the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).
- The role and membership of NTAGI have expanded over the years in tune with the emerging needs and priorities of the Government of India.
- The NTAGI includes a Standing Technical Sub-Committee (STSC).
- The STSC is tasked with undertaking technical review of scientific evidence on matters related to immunization policy and programmes.
- Final recommendations are drafted by the NTAGI taking into account the scientific review by the STSC and any other relevant evidence

Objective and scope of activities

- The overall objective of the NTAGI is to provide **advice**

to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on the strategies to control the burden and appropriately evaluate the impact of immunization on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPDs) in the country.

- The NTAGI **shall evaluate licensed vaccines as well as prioritize other related interventions such as associated immune globulins and chemo-prophylactic agents and new technologies** for delivery, logistics, disease prevention and monitoring of VPD prevalence, vaccination programme and other adjuncts to VPD control'.

NTAGI recommendations

NTAGI recommendations may include guidance on all matters related to immunization policy and programmes: route, dose and frequency of administration of the vaccine population groups (e.g. high risk groups, urban slums and tribal populations) circumstances (e.g. pandemics, natural disaster etc.) in which a vaccine or related agent is recommended strategies for introduction of the vaccine (e.g. pilot/phased introduction, Special Immunization Activities (SIAs), vaccines for post-exposure prophylaxis etc.) contraindications and adverse events associated with the vaccine or related agent recommendations on generation of relevant evidence, prior to and after vaccine introduction, monitoring of delivery and impact after vaccine introduction.

Members of NTAGI

- The NTAGI is chaired by the Secretary of Health and Family Welfare (H & FW), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, while the Secretary of Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology and the Secretary of Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare serve as the Co-chairs, all functioning in an ex-officio capacity.
- Core membership is composed of Government of India

representatives functioning in an ex-officio capacity and independent experts. Core independent experts are expected to serve in their own personal capacity and to not represent the interest of any particular group or organization. In addition, liaison members comprised of representatives of MoHFW, professional organizations and international partners functioning in an ex-officio capacity, as notified in the NTAGI reconstitution order, represent their respective organizations.

- The Chair, Co-chairs and independent Core Members engage in advising and deciding on final recommendations.
- Liaison members and ex-officio members (other than the Chair and Co-Chair) may contribute to the discussion, but are not engaged in decisions or final recommendations.
- Ex-officio members and liaison representatives are expected to represent the position and views of their organizations/departments. Members can only serve in one capacity

Appointment of NTAGI members

NTAGI members are selected based on their expertise and qualifications necessary to contribute to the accomplishments of the NTAGI's objectives. The membership of NTAGI will normally include one to two experts from the following disciplines: epidemiology, biotechnology, infectious diseases, community medicine, pharmacology, vaccinology, health economics, paediatrics, virology, bacteriology, immunology, neurology, mathematical modelling, general practice, public health, nursing, clinical research, community engagement and communication or other relevant disciplines, health systems and delivery and management of immunisation programmes.

National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC)

- NEGVAC constituted by the government is providing

guidance on prioritisation of population groups, procurement and inventory management, vaccine selection and vaccine delivery and tracking mechanism

- It was set up in August 2020 under the chairmanship of Niti Aayog member VK Paul, to conceptualise a strategy for coronavirus vaccine delivery in India.
- National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAC) in consultation with State Governments and all relevant stakeholders have prepared and presented a detailed blueprint of vaccine storage, distribution, and administration.
- The Expert Group in consultation with the States is working actively on vaccine prioritization and distribution of vaccines.