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Hawai‘i pauses Johnson & Johnson vaccinations

HONOLULU – The Hawai‘i Department of Health (DOH) is pausing use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine while the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) review data involving six cases in which individuals who received the Johnson &Johnson vaccine developed blood clots.

“We’re are pausing out of an abundance of caution. Vaccine safety is of the utmost importance,” said Health Director Dr. Elizabeth Char. “The risk of developing a blood clot is very low. About 6.8 million Johnson & Johnson vaccines have been administered in the United States. Six people have developed blood clots.”

The blood clots, called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, occurred in women ages 18 to 48. Symptoms occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination.

There are no reports of anyone in Hawai‘i developing blood clots after receiving a Johnson & Johnson vaccine. People who received a Johnson & Johnson vaccine within the past few weeks should monitor themselves for symptoms and contact their healthcare provider if they experience a severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath.

“I still have confidence in the vaccine. These adverse events appear to be extremely rare, but this transparent and deliberate pause ensures the medical community is aware of the potential adverse events.” Char said.

Some vaccination providers scheduled to administer Johnson & Johnson vaccine in the coming days may offer Pfizer or Moderna vaccine instead.
The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which use different delivery technology than the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, continue to be used in Hawai‘i and around the country. Scheduling opportunities can be found on the registration page at hawaiicovid19.com.

For more information, see the official CDC-FDA release: https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/joint-cdc-and-fda-statement-johnson-johnson-covid-19-vaccine.

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