

COVID-19 Vaccine Bulletin #3

Use of COVID-19 Vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech)

The purpose of the Vaccine Bulletin is to give you the latest information about COVID-19 vaccines. Due to the ever-changing landscape of vaccine research and distribution, it is expected that this information will need to be updated frequently.

For this bulletin, we will focus on some key points taken from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization's (NACI) [Recommendations on the Use of COVID-19 Vaccine\(s\)](#).

NACI's Recommendations on the Use of COVID-19 Vaccine(s)¹

Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19

- The vaccine is authorized for use in Canada for individuals **16 years of age and older**.
- Clinical trials have demonstrated that the vaccine is effective in the short term against symptomatic COVID-19 disease.
- Efficacy achieved after the second dose is higher than that of a single dose.
- There is currently insufficient evidence on the duration of protection and on the efficacy of the vaccine in preventing death, hospitalization, infection and reducing transmission of SARS-CoV-2, although studies are ongoing.
- No serious safety concerns have been identified to date in clinical trials.
- Some adverse events are common affecting more than 10% of those who receive the vaccine. The adverse events are mild to moderate and resolve within a few days. These side effects include pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, and fever. Some adverse events, including fever, are more common after the second dose.

Who should the COVID-19 vaccine be offered to?

- It should be offered to individuals in the authorized age group (16 years of age and older) without contraindications to the vaccine. Initial doses should be prioritized for the key populations outlined by NACI and summarized in WDGPH's [Vaccine Bulletin #2](#).
- The vaccine may be offered to eligible individuals who have had previously PCR-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection but initial doses may be prioritized for those who have not had previously PCR-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Who should not be offered the COVID-19 vaccine? (until further evidence is available)

- The COVID-19 vaccine should not be offered to the following populations until further evidence is available. This is subject to change based on emerging evidence and individual risk assessment.
 - Individuals who are immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment, or those with autoimmune disorder
 - Individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding
 - Adolescents 12 to 15 years of age

What are the contraindications and precautions related to the vaccine?

- The vaccine is contraindicated in individuals with a history of anaphylaxis after previous administration of the vaccine.
- The vaccine is contraindicated in individuals with proven immediate or anaphylactic hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine or its container.
- In individuals with bleeding disorders, the condition should be managed prior to immunization to minimize the risk of bleeding.
- Immunization should be deferred in individuals with COVID-19 symptoms to avoid attributing any complications resulting from the infection to the vaccine and to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission during immunization.




How will the vaccine be administered?

- The vaccine is administered intramuscularly in a two-dose schedule with the second dose administered 21 (authorized interval) to 28 days (alternate interval) apart.
- The vaccine series should be completed with the same vaccine product.
- Serological testing is not needed before or after receiving the vaccine.
- COVID-19 vaccines should not be given simultaneously with other live or inactivated vaccines at this time, unless other vaccines are required for post-exposure prophylaxis.
- It is recommended to wait for a period of at least 28 days after the administration of the complete two-dose vaccine series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine before the administration of another vaccine due to the elicitation of an inflammatory cytokine response.
- It is recommended to wait for a period of at least 14 days after the administration of another vaccine before administering a COVID-19 vaccine.
- COVID-19 vaccines should not be given simultaneously with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma.

What else does NACI recommend?

- All individuals should continue to practice infection prevention and control measures for COVID-19 regardless of immunization with COVID-19 vaccine due to insufficient evidence on the duration of protection and effectiveness of the vaccines in preventing asymptomatic infection.
- Routine immunization programs and immunization with other vaccines recommended by NACI should continue.
- Clinical trials assessing COVID-19 vaccines should continue to include individuals who are more vulnerable to infection due to biological and social factors to ensure that vaccines are informed by robust safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy data.
- In addition, NACI recommends the continuation of clinical trials and ongoing follow-up of participants to determine the level of immunity needed to prevent disease, duration of protection, efficacy in different sub-populations, and medium to long-term safety.

Ontario's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan²

| | VACCINE QUANTITY | POPULATION TO BE VACCINATED | DISTRIBUTION SITES |
|--------|--|--|---|
| PHASES |  <p>Initial doses will vaccinate over 2,500 people, with additional shipments arriving over the coming weeks</p> <p>90,000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech and estimated 35,000-85,000 doses of Moderna vaccines (pending approval) are expected in the coming weeks</p> <p>An estimated total of over 2M doses is expected in this phase</p> | <p>Residents, essential caregivers, and staff of congregate care settings for seniors</p> <p>Health care workers</p> <p>Adults in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations</p> <p>Adult recipients of chronic home health care</p> | <p>Initially, two pilot sites, followed by selected hospital sites in Grey-Lockdown and Red-Control zones, expanding to approximately 21 hospitals across the province</p> <p>LTC Homes and Retirement Homes as soon as feasible.</p> |
| |  <p>Increasing stock of vaccines available.</p> | <p>Expanded for health care workers, long-term care homes, retirement homes, home care patients with chronic conditions and additional First Nation communities and urban Indigenous populations, including Métis and Inuit adults.</p> | <p>Expanded vaccination sites</p> |
| |  <p>Vaccines available for every Ontarian who wants to be immunized.</p> | <p>All eligible Ontarians</p> | <p>Widely available across Ontario</p> |

Updates to Health Protection and Promotion Act

- There have been amendments made to the Regulations under the Health Protection and Promotion Act to mandate the collection of information on:
 - COVID-19 vaccine history for those who have a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis ([Ontario Regulation 569](#))
 - Any adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) that may occur after receiving the vaccine ([Ontario Regulation 135/18](#))
- Information on how to report an adverse event following COVID-19 is available on [Public Health Ontario website](#).

PHAC Webinar: COVID-19 Vaccine Foundations for Health Care Providers

- The recording for the PHAC webinar will soon be available on the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease (AMMI) Canada website here: www.ammi.ca/?ID=183.

References

1. An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS) National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) (December 12, 2020). [Recommendations on the Use of COVID-19 Vaccine\(s\)](#) .
2. COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force (December 11, 2020). [Ontario's Vaccine Distribution Implementation Plan](#).