

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Booster Doses – Children 5-11; Bivalent Products  
**Date:** September 2, 2022  
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**To:** Health Care Providers, Pharmacies, Hospitals, Assessment Centres  
**From:** Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Associate Medical Officer of Health

- **Children 5-11 years of age are now eligible to receive their first COVID-19 booster.**
- **The recommended interval is six months (minimum three months) following the primary series. The Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) vaccine should be used.**
- **Children with medical conditions that increase the risk of severe COVID-19 illness are most important to immunize.**
- **NACI has issued guidance on the use of bivalent COVID-19 vaccines.**
- **Bivalent vaccine booster doses will begin to be available in September and will be rolled out based on risk, as determined by the province.**
- **Bivalent vaccines are not approved for those 5-11 years of age.**

## First Booster for Children 5-11 Years of Age

On September 1, 2022, the Government of Ontario [expanded eligibility](#) for COVID-19 booster doses to children aged 5-11 years old. This follows the release of [new guidance](#) from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) on August 19, 2022.

All children in this age group are eligible for, and are encouraged to receive, a booster dose. However, a booster is particularly important for children with medical conditions that may place them at increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness, such as<sup>1</sup>:

- Immunocompromising conditions
- Cardiac or pulmonary disorders
- Diabetes mellitus and/or other metabolic diseases
- Neurologic or neurodevelopmental conditions
- Renal disease, anemia or hemoglobinopathy
- Cancer
- Obesity
- Down syndrome

Eligible children are recommended to receive their booster at least six months (168 days) after completing their primary series. However, it can be administered as early as three months (84 days) following the primary series with informed consent. Only the Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) vaccine has been authorized as a booster in the 5-11 years of age group<sup>1</sup>.

Eligible individuals have three options for accessing their booster dose:

1. Booking an appointment with their primary care provider
2. Visiting any [pharmacy that offers COVID-19 vaccines](#)
3. Booking an appointment at a [Public Health clinic online](#) or by calling Public Health at 1-800-265-7293 x7006 (Monday - Friday; 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

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To order vaccine fax a completed [order form](#) and [temperature logs](#) to 519-823-4903. Orders will be filled up to Thursday at noon for delivery the following week. Pick-up through the week at a public health office can also be arranged. Use [this link](#) to order single-dose syringes for pick up at select clinic locations.

### **COVID-19 Bivalent (Original + Omicron BA.1) Boosters Guidance**

On September 1, 2022, NACI also [issued its guidance](#) on the use of bivalent, Omicron-containing mRNA vaccines. In the context of a fall booster campaign, NACI has recommended that the bivalent vaccine:

- Should be offered as a booster dose to adults 18 years of age or older.
- May be offered as a booster dose to adolescents 12-17 years of age with moderately to severely immunocompromising conditions and/or who have biological or social risk factors that place them at high risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19<sup>2</sup>.
- NACI recommends that the COVID-19 bivalent booster doses be offered at an interval of six months following the most recent vaccine dose, regardless of which vaccine product is used<sup>2</sup>. Additional information is included in NACI's statement.

On September 1, 2022, [Health Canada authorized](#) a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine from Moderna that includes a component targeting the BA.1 Omicron strain.

- Moderna Spikevax bivalent vaccine (original + omicron BA.1.) is authorized for individuals 18 years and older.

Pfizer-BioNTech has also submitted an application to Health Canada for a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine, though this has not yet been approved.

The Ministry of Health will determine eligibility criteria for the bivalent vaccine, based on NACI's guidance.

Ontario is expected to begin receiving doses of Moderna's bivalent vaccine in September. Initial doses will be allocated to individuals at greatest risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes (e.g., residents in long-term care) and eligibility will change in response to vaccine supply.

The prioritization and sequencing of populations eligible for the bivalent vaccine is determined by the province; details will be shared as they are available.

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**References:**

1. Ontario Ministry of Health. COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Recommendations, V9.0 August 31, 2022. Available at:  
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2. Public Health Agency of Canada. An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS) National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI); Recommendations on the use of bivalent Omicron-containing mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. September 1, 2022. Available at:  
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