

SUBJECT: **COVID-19 Vaccine Updates – Bivalent Booster for Children 5-11;
Co-administration Guidance**

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Pages: 2

To: Health Care Providers, Pharmacies, Hospitals, Assessment Centres

From: Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Associate Medical Officer of Health

- **Children 5-11 years of age can now receive a bivalent COVID-19 booster.**
 - **This booster is recommended at 6 months (minimum 3 months) after the most recent vaccine dose.**
 - **Children who already received a booster this fall do not generally need another booster.**
- **Limited quantities will be available initially. Public Health will be offering booster doses to eligible children and you can also order this vaccine for your office.**
- **For anyone age 6 months or older, please consider giving COVID-19 vaccines, influenza vaccines, and other vaccines for which a patient is eligible together at the same visit.**

Bivalent Booster for Children 5-11 Years of Age

On December 9, 2022, Health Canada authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) BA.4/5 Bivalent COVID-19 vaccine for use as a booster dose in children 5-11 years old.¹ Limited quantities of the vaccine will become available in WDG beginning the week of December 19.

National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) advises that a bivalent, Omicron-containing vaccine is the preferred choice for a booster for all eligible age groups, including children ages 5-11, as it elicits higher antibody titres against the BA.4/5 subvariant compared to the original (monovalent) booster vaccines.¹

A COVID-19 booster is recommended for all children in this age group. However, it is particularly important for children with medical conditions that may place them at increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness.¹

Consistent with adults, children should receive their booster at least six months (168 days) after their most recent dose. However, it may be offered as early as three months (84 days) following the last dose with informed consent.¹

NACI currently advises that children who have already received a COVID-19 booster this fall do not need to receive another booster with the bivalent vaccine. However, children at higher risk of severe illness could be offered a bivalent booster dose based on clinical discretion, provided the appropriate interval is followed.¹

Accessing Vaccine

Initially, this bivalent vaccine will be locally available in very limited quantities. WDGPB has begun to invite parents of eligible 5–11-year-old children to pre-register for an appointment at clinics that will begin the week of December 19. Parents will be able to [book an appointment online](#) or by phoning **1-800-265-7293 x7006**. If you have eligible children in your practice, you can direct them to contact WDGPB at this number.

If you would like to order the bivalent vaccine for your office, please submit a completed [order form](#) with temperature logs to **519-823-4903**. To request single-dose prefilled syringes, please complete the [online order form](#). WDGPB will fill as many orders as possible based on local supply. Supply is expected to increase in the new year.

Co-Administration Guidance Update

NACI has updated their recommendations regarding co-administration and now advise that COVID-19 vaccines may be given concurrently with (or at any time before/after) any other vaccines for any clients 6 months of age or older.¹

When immunizing, please consider offering all vaccines for which your patient is due including COVID-19 (primary series or booster), influenza, and other routine immunizations. Ensuring that your patients are fully up to date will maximize their protection during this respiratory season.

References:

1. Public Health Agency of Canada. Updated recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccine booster doses in children 5 to 11 years of age and concurrent vaccine administration. December 9, 2022. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/updated-recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccine-booster-doses-children-5-11-years-concurrent-administration.pdf>

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