
SUBJECT: Expanded Eligibility for COVID-19 Booster Doses
Date: (Revised) July 13, 2022
Pages: 5
To: Health Care Providers, Pharmacies, Hospitals
From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health

- **Adults 18 to 59 years of age are eligible to receive their second covid booster dose (i.e., their 4th dose).**
- **Having a booster dose this summer may or may not impact the timing of your patients' booster dose in the fall with a bivalent vaccine.**
- **The timing of the bivalent vaccine arriving this fall for the general population is not certain.**
- **Careful counselling of individual patients on whether receiving a booster dose this summer versus waiting for a bivalent vaccine this fall is a risk benefit conversation based on individual medical conditions, their personal exposure risk and the household they live in.**

Expanded Eligibility for Booster Doses

The Government of Ontario has expanded eligibility for COVID-19 booster doses. Individuals aged 18 years and over are now eligible to receive a second booster dose.

While the eligibility for booster doses has now broadened substantially, booster doses are still most important for those individuals who are at greatest risk of morbidity and mortality from COVID-19. This includes older adults and those who are immunocompromised.

Individuals who are at higher risk of severe disease from COVID-19 infection are recommended to get the second booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they become eligible, including:

- Individuals 60 years of age and older.
- First Nation, Inuit and Metis individuals and their non-indigenous household members (18 years of age and older).
- Residents of a long-term care home, retirement home, or Elder Care Lodge and older adults living in other congregate settings that provide assisted living and health services.
- Moderately or severely immuno-compromised individuals (12 years of age and older).

Omicron-containing Bivalent Booster Vaccine

The Moderna vaccine mRNA-1273.214 – which in clinical trials demonstrated superior antibody response against Omicron – will be available in limited amounts this fall. The Moderna vaccine mRNA-1273.214 will contain the BA1 variant. Vaccines against the circulating BA4/5 variants are under development and are expected at the end of this year.

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NACI has not yet commented on the interval between receiving a booster dose this summer and a bivalent booster dose this fall. Based on all previous guidance, there will be a minimum interval (likely 84 days or 3 months) as well as an optimal interval.

Preparing for COVID-19 Booster Doses

COVax

The administration of COVID-19 vaccine doses is required to be entered into COVax. Please ensure that all individuals using COVax have their accounts activated or re-activated as needed.

Table 1: Preferred Products for a Booster Dose

Population	Vaccine type (and dose) for booster doses which may be preferred	Rationale or additional considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 to 29 year olds (including those moderately to severely immunocompromised) 	Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg) is recommended. For moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals, the vaccine offered is based on clinical discretion; if Moderna is being used, a 100 mcg dose may be considered.	Lower reported rates of myocarditis/pericarditis following vaccination with Pfizer BioNTech (30 mcg) compared to Moderna (100 mcg) (based on second dose data). There is currently very limited data on the use of Moderna booster dose in adolescents 12 to 17 years of age.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≥70 year olds Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes or seniors in other congregate settings Moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals aged 30 years of age and older (for 3rd dose as part of the primary series and for the booster dose) 	Either Moderna (100mcg or 50mcg) or Pfizer-BioNTech (30mcg) may be considered. If Moderna vaccine is being used as the booster product, a 100 mcg dose may be preferred, based on clinical discretion.	Data suggests that the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine may provide a more robust humoral and cellular immune response. Moderna (100 mcg) induces somewhat higher antibody levels compared to Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg). Protection (against infection and severe disease) from a primary series with Moderna (100 mcg) may be more durable than Pfizer (30mcg). It is possible that Moderna (100 mcg) may induce a better immune response than Moderna (50 mcg). Currently there are no data comparing the immune responses after a booster vaccination with Moderna

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		(100mcg) and Pfizer-BioNTech 930mcg) in these populations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all other populations in whom booster doses are recommended that have not been specified above. 	Either Moderna (50 mcg) or Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg) are suitable products as a booster dose.	Both Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are authorized as booster doses by Health Canada. Individuals who are not willing to receive an mRNA vaccine should be made aware of the longer-term effectiveness and safety data that is available for the mRNA vaccine products as compared to the other authorized COVID-19 vaccines vaccine as part of informed consent. A viral vector vaccine should only be considered when all other authorized COVID-19 vaccines are contraindicated.

Please note that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is now preferred for individuals 29 years of age and under (as opposed to age 24 and under) due to lower reported rates of myocarditis/pericarditis following immunization. This aligns with [NACI's recent guidance](#) which uses the same age cut-off.

Table 2: COVID-19 Immunization Series and Recommended Intervals for Individuals ≥ 5 Years of Age

Age	Recommended Intervals	Minimum Intervals
5 to 11 years (or 6-11 years, Moderna)	Primary series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st dose 2nd dose, 8 weeks after 1st dose Booster Doses - Not eligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st dose 2nd dose, 19 days (Pfizer) or 21 days (Moderna) after 1st dose Booster Doses - Not eligible
12 to 17 years	Primary series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st dose 2nd dose, 8 weeks after 1st dose Booster dose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st booster dose 6 months after 2nd dose 	Primary series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st dose 2nd dose, 19 days (Pfizer-BioNTech) or 21 days (Moderna) after 1st dose Booster dose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st booster dose 3 months after 2nd dose

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd booster dose-not eligible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd booster dose-not eligible
18+	<p>Primary series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st dose • 2nd dose, 8 weeks after 1st dose <p>Boosters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st booster dose, 5 months after 2nd dose • 2nd booster dose, 5 months after first booster 	<p>Primary series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st dose • 2nd dose, 19 days (Pfizer-BioNTech) or 21 days (Moderna) after 1st dose <p>Boosters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st booster dose, 3 months after 2nd dose • 2nd booster dose, 3 months after first booster
Moderately or severely immuno-compromised individuals ≥ 5 years	<p>Primary series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st dose • 2nd dose, 8 weeks after 1st dose • 3rd dose, 8 weeks after 2nd dose <p>Boosters</p> <p>1st booster dose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (if 5-11) not eligible • (if 12-17) 6 months (if 18+) 5 months after 3rd dose <p>2nd booster dose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (if 5-17) not eligible • (if 18+) 5 months after first booster 	<p>Primary series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st dose • 2nd dose, 19 days (Pfizer-BioNTech) or 21 days (Moderna) after 1st dose • 3rd dose, 28 days after 2nd dose <p>Boosters</p> <p>1st booster dose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (if 5-11) not eligible • (if 12+) 3 months after 3rd dose <p>2nd booster dose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (if 5-17) not eligible • (if 18+) 3 months after first booster dose

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Vaccine Options for Your Office

The Moderna vaccine does not require pre-mixing, and after first puncture it can be [stored at room temperature or refrigerated up to 24 hours](#). There is availability of 10 doses of 50 mcg/ml in a multi-dose vial.

The Pfizer vaccine is stored frozen and requires pre-mixing of sodium chloride solution. After dilution the vial must be used within 6 hours and can be [stored at room temperature](#). There is availability of 6 doses of 30 mcg/ml in a multi-dose vial.

Ordering COVID-19 Vaccine

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. Pickup through the week at a public health office can also be arranged. Single doses can be ordered through the online portal [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Order Form](#).

All pertinent vaccine information can be found on the WDG Public Health website, including order forms: <https://wdgpublichealth.ca/healthcare-providers/covid-19-information-healthcare-providers/covid-19-vaccine-administration>

References:

1. Public Health Agency of Canada. An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS) National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), Interim guidance on planning considerations for a fall 2022 COVID-19 vaccine booster program in Canada. June 29, 2022. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/naci-guidance-planning-fall-2022-covid-19-vaccine-booster.pdf>
2. Ministry of Health Guidance Documents
https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/covid19_vaccine.aspx

For more information, please contact:

Name/Title: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health
Email: Nicola.mercer@wdgpublichealth.ca
Website: www.wdgpublichealth.ca