

SUBJECT: Fall 2023 Vaccines – COVID-19
Date: September 25, 2023
Pages: 4 plus attachments
To: Physicians, Hospitals, Pharmacies, Long Term Care, Retirement Homes
From: Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Associate Medical Officer of Health

- **Updated, XBB-containing mRNA vaccines will be used for this fall's COVID-19 vaccination campaign.** To date, only Moderna's vaccine has been approved.
- **Initial vaccine doses are allocated to hospitals and high-risk congregate settings,** and will be available to the community afterward (October 2023).
- Individuals should be vaccinated if it has been **≥6 months since their last vaccine dose or infection,** though they may be immunized **as early as 3 months.**
- **WDGPH will be running immunization clinics** to augment availability through primary care, pharmacies, and other settings.

On September 14, 2023, the Government of Ontario [launched the Fall 2023 vaccination campaign](#) for COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

- Information about influenza vaccine was provided in a memo on September 12.
- Information about RSV vaccine will be provided separately as additional program details become available.

COVID-19 Vaccine Products

The Fall 2023 campaign will use the updated Moderna SPIKEVAX COVID-19 vaccine that targets the XBB.1.5 lineage. This vaccine was approved by Health Canada on September 12, 2023.

Age Range	COVID-19 Vaccination History	Dose Schedule	Dose Volume	Presentation
≥12 years	≥0 previous doses	1 dose (50 mcg)	0.5 mL	2.5 mL vial (0.10 mg/mL) Royal Blue Cap Coral Blue Label
5-11 years	≥0 previous doses	1 dose (25 mcg)	0.25 mL	
6 months-4 years	0 previous doses	2 doses (25 mcg), 8 weeks apart (4 weeks minimum)	0.25 mL	
	≥1 previous doses	1 dose (25 mcg)	0.25 mL	
Storage: Up to 30 days at 2-8°C if unpunctured; Up to 24 hrs at 8-25°C or once punctured.				

Updated COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Novavax are currently being reviewed by Health Canada; additional updates will be provided pending approval.

COVID19 (& Flu) Vaccine Prioritization

A common, risk-based approach will be used to prioritize access to both COVID-19 and influenza vaccines, as doses become available. This fall, initial doses will be prioritized for:

- Hospitalized patients and hospital staff;
- Residents, staff, and caregivers in long-term care homes and elder care lodges.

Once the above settings have received vaccines, additional vaccine supply will be allocated to community-based immunization settings. Priority groups for immunization include:

- Health care workers and first responders;
- Groups at higher risk from COVID-19 and/or influenza:
 - Residents and staff of other congregate living settings;
 - Older adults (age ≥ 65);
 - Young children (age 6 months-4 years);
 - Pregnant individuals;
 - Individuals from a First Nation, Inuit, or Métis (FNIM) community, and/or who self-identify as FNIM, and their household members;
 - Members of racialized and other equity deserving communities;
 - Individuals (age ≥ 6 months) with underlying health conditions as defined by NACI (please see appendix on page 4).

Ordering COVID-19 Vaccine

The province expects to start receiving the updated Moderna SPIKEVAX vaccine later in September. In advance of availability, please complete and submit the [order form](#).

Please note: this form includes the Pfizer XBB vaccine though it has not yet been approved by Health Canada and is not yet available for order.

To order single-dose syringes for pick up at select clinic locations, please [use this link](#).

Administering COVID-19 Vaccine

NACI recommends that individuals age ≥ 6 months receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine dose if it has been **at least six months** since the previous vaccine dose or known COVID-19 infection.¹ Immunizing at a shorter interval (i.e. **3-6 months**) is also perfectly safe and reasonable, and may be appropriate for logistical reasons or based on a patient's risk profile.

For individuals who have not previously been vaccinated: An XBB-containing vaccine can be used to initiate or complete a primary series. Please refer to the table above for the dose schedule. Existing recommendations on vaccine interchangeability apply to XBB-containing vaccines.

This fall, please consider offering your patients their COVID-19 and flu shots at the same visit. These vaccines can be administered simultaneously (i.e., same day) or at any time before or after one another. This guidance applies to everyone over the age of six months and is intended to reduce barriers to receiving all recommended vaccines.

The Ministry of Health has provided [updated COVID-19 vaccination guidance](#). Please check the [Ministry of Health COVID-19 website](#) for the latest information.

Public Health Immunization Clinics

WDGPH will be providing Flu and COVID-19 vaccines at clinics throughout our region beginning October 17 until the end of November. Community members will be able to book appointments online once we have received the vaccine. Alternatively, individuals can contact WDGPH for assistance in booking appointments at **1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006**.

Additional Resources

- [SPIKEVAX XBB.1.5 Product Monograph](#)
- NACI Statements:
 - [Guidance on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in the fall of 2023](#) (July 11, 2023)
 - [Addendum to the guidance on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in the fall of 2023](#) (September 12, 2023)
- [Ministry of Health COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance \(September 22, 2023\)](#)

References:

1. Public Health Agency of Canada. An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS) National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), Addendum to the guidance on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in the fall of 2023, September 12, 2023. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-addendum-guidance-use-covid-19-vaccines-fall-2023/statement.pdf>

For more information, please contact:

Name/Title: Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Associate Medical Officer of Health
Email: matthew.tenenbaum@wdgpublichealth.ca
Website: www.wdgpublichealth.ca

Priority Health Conditions for...	
Influenza Immunization	COVID-19 Immunization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiac or pulmonary disorders (includes bronchopulmonary dysplasia, cystic fibrosis, and asthma); • Diabetes mellitus and other metabolic diseases; • Cancer, immune compromising conditions (due to underlying disease, therapy, or both, such as solid organ transplant or hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients); • Renal disease; • Anemia or hemoglobinopathy; • Neurologic or neurodevelopmental conditions (includes neuromuscular, neurovascular, neurodegenerative, neurodevelopmental conditions, and seizure disorders [and, for children, includes febrile seizures and isolated developmental delay], but excludes migraines and psychiatric conditions without neurological conditions) • Morbid obesity (defined as BMI of 40 kg/m² and over); and • Children 6 months to 18 years of age undergoing treatment for long periods with acetylsalicylic acid, because of the potential increase of Reye's syndrome associated with influenza 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer • Cerebrovascular disease • Chronic kidney disease • Chronic liver diseases (limited to: cirrhosis, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, alcoholic liver disease, and autoimmune hepatitis) • Chronic lung diseases (limited to: bronchiectasis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, interstitial lung disease, pulmonary hypertension, pulmonary embolism) • Cystic fibrosis • Diabetes mellitus, type 1 and type 2 • Disabilities (e.g. Down syndrome, learning, intellectual, or developmental disabilities; ADHD; cerebral palsy; congenital disabilities; spinal cord injuries) • Heart conditions (e.g., cardiomyopathies, coronary artery disease, heart failure, etc.) • HIV infection • Mental health disorders (limited to: mood disorders, including depression; schizophrenia spectrum disorders) • Obesity • Pregnancy and recent pregnancy • Primary immunodeficiency diseases • Smoking, current or former • Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant • Tuberculosis • Use of corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive medication
<u>Source: NACI</u>	<u>Source: NACI</u>