
SUBJECT: Subsequent Vaccine Doses for Patients with Myocarditis/Pericarditis following COVID-19 Immunization

Date: January 17, 2022

Pages: 2

To: Primary Care Providers, Pharmacies, Hospitals

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

Summary

- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has provided [updated guidance](#) regarding vaccination of individuals who experienced myocarditis or pericarditis following COVID-19 vaccination.¹
- Individuals with a history compatible with pericarditis, who had no cardiac workup or had normal cardiac investigations, can receive their next dose once they are symptom free and at least 90 days have passed since vaccination.
- Individuals who experienced myocarditis (including any person who had abnormal cardiac investigations) should generally have further doses deferred. However, these individuals may choose to receive further doses following a discussion of risks and benefits with their health care provider.

Background

As of January 9, 2022, there have been 618 reports of myocarditis/pericarditis following receipt of an mRNA vaccine in Ontario, for a reporting rate of 23.3 per million mRNA vaccine doses administered. Rates have been highest in younger age groups (under 25 years old), among males, and following a second vaccine dose. Onset is usually within one week of immunization. Cases are typically mild and respond well to conservative treatment.^{2,3}

On January 14, 2022, NACI issued [updated guidance](#)¹ regarding vaccination of individuals who experienced (or may have experienced) this adverse event in the past. Previously, individuals reported to WDGPH with a diagnosis of myocarditis or pericarditis following immunization were generally advised to defer subsequent vaccine doses until more information was available. Health care providers who submitted AEFIs may have received this recommendation as it relates to their patients. **These patients are now eligible to receive subsequent vaccine doses in accordance with the guidance below.**

NACI continues to recommend that¹:

- As a **precautionary measure**, further doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines should generally be **deferred** among people who experienced **myocarditis (with or without pericarditis)** within 6 weeks of receiving a previous dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. This includes **any person who had an abnormal cardiac investigation** including electrocardiogram (ECG), elevated troponins, echocardiogram or cardiac MRI after a dose of an mRNA vaccine.

WDG Public Health Physicians Advisory
Subsequent Vaccine Doses for Patients with Myocarditis/Pericarditis following COVID-19
Immunization
January 17, 2022
Page 2 of 2

NACI now additionally recommends that¹:

- Those with a history compatible with **pericarditis** and who either had **no cardiac workup or had normal cardiac investigations**, can receive the next dose once they are **symptom free and at least 90 days has passed since vaccination**.
- Some people with confirmed **myocarditis (with or without pericarditis)** after a dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine **may choose to receive another dose of vaccine** after discussing the risks and benefits with their health care provider. Please review the [updated guidance](#)¹ for further details.

It is still important to counsel all patients about the risk of myocarditis and pericarditis following receipt of an mRNA vaccine. Patients receiving an mRNA vaccine should also be advised to seek medical attention if they develop suggestive symptoms including chest pain, shortness of breath, or palpitations. While these symptoms are most suggestive if they occur in the week following immunization, they should be assessed regardless of time from vaccination to onset.⁴

Timely assessment of patients with possible myocarditis or pericarditis is critical to making a diagnosis. SickKids has created a [guidance document](#)⁵ regarding the assessment and management of individuals suspected to have myocarditis/pericarditis, which health care providers are encouraged to consult.

References:

1. Government of Canada - National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Summary of NACI advice on vaccination with COVID-19 vaccines following myocarditis (with or without pericarditis), January 14, 2022. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/summary-advice-vaccination-covid-19-vaccines-following-myocarditis-with-without-pericarditis.html>
2. Public Health Ontario. Adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) for COVID-19 in Ontario: December 12, 2020 to January 9, 2022, January 2022. Available at: https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/epi/covid-19-aefi-report.pdf?sc_lang=en
3. Public Health Ontario. Myocarditis and pericarditis after COVID-19 mRNA vaccines, November 2021. Available at: https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/vaccines/2021/11/myocarditis-pericarditis-mrna-vaccines.pdf?sc_lang=en
4. Government of Canada. COVID-19 vaccine: Canadian Immunization Guide, January 2022. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-26-covid-19-vaccine.html>
5. SickKids. Myocarditis and pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination in children: Interim guidance, August 6, 2021. Available at: https://www.sickkids.ca/contentassets/50c1bd3c95e74dcf9fa7c9f6fd707bd7/interim-guidance_myocarditis-pericarditis-after-mrna-covid-19-vaccination-in-children.pdf

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