

---

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Booster Doses – Updated 18+ Eligibility, Dose Interval, and Preferred Product

Date: December 17, 2021

Pages: 3

To: Health Care Providers, Pharmacies, Hospitals

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

---

- **Beginning December 20, individuals aged 18 and over will be eligible to receive their COVID-19 booster dose.**
- **Individuals are now eligible for their booster dose 84 days (approx. 3 months) after completing their primary series.**
- **Immunocompromised individuals who received a three-dose primary series may also receive a booster dose (i.e. their fourth dose).**
- **The Ministry of Health has issued guidance regarding which vaccine products are preferred for use as boosters. Please note that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is now preferred for individuals aged 29 and younger.**

## **Expanded Eligibility and New Dose Interval for Booster Doses**

On December 15, 2021, the Government of Ontario further [expanded eligibility](#) for COVID-19 booster doses.<sup>1</sup> Beginning December 20, individuals aged 18 years and over are eligible to receive a booster dose as early as three months (84 days) following their second dose.

The shortened dose interval of 84 days applies to all eligible individuals, including those who were eligible to receive a booster prior to this most recent announcement. While this is not currently reflected in the provincial [COVID-19 Third Dose Recommendations](#)<sup>2</sup>, updates are expected to follow shortly.

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. Please consider if there are any ways that you can promote the importance of booster doses, particularly to these patients.

## **Booster Doses following a Three-Dose Primary Series**

The provincial [COVID-19 Third Dose Recommendations](#)<sup>2</sup> were updated to confirm that immunocompromised individuals who are eligible for a three-dose primary series may receive a booster dose (i.e. their fourth dose). The recommendations will be updated to reflect that these individuals will be eligible  $\geq 84$  days after completion of the primary series, consistent with other booster-eligible populations.

## WDG Public Health Physician Update

### COVID-19 Booster Doses – Updated 18+ Eligibility, Dose Interval, and Preferred Product

December 17, 2021

Page 2 of 3

#### Preferred Products for a Booster Dose

The provincial [COVID-19 Third Dose Recommendations](#)<sup>2</sup> now include a table summarizing which vaccine products and doses are preferred for use as a booster.

Population	Vaccine type (and dose) for booster doses which may be preferred	Rationale or additional considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>18 to 29 year olds</li></ul>	Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg).	Lower reported rates of myocarditis/pericarditis following vaccination with Pfizer BioNTech (30 mcg) compared to Moderna (100 mcg) (based on second dose data).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>≥70 year olds</li><li>Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes or seniors in other congregate settings</li><li>Moderately to severely immunocompromised adults (for 3rd dose as part of the primary series and for the booster dose)</li></ul>	Either Moderna 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.	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). These populations may have less robust immune function (elderly) or a diminished immune response to the vaccine (some immunocompromised individuals). It is possible that Moderna (100 mcg) may induce a better immune response than Moderna (50 mcg).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>For all other populations in whom booster doses are recommended that have not been specified above.</li></ul>	Either Moderna (50 mcg) or Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg) are suitable products as a booster dose.	Authorized as booster doses by Health Canada.

Please note that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is now preferred for individuals aged 29 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](#)<sup>3</sup> which uses the same age cut-off.

**WDG Public Health Physician Update**  
**COVID-19 Booster Doses – Updated 18+ Eligibility, Dose Interval, and Preferred Product**  
**December 17, 2021**  
Page 3 of 3

**References:**

1. Ontario Newsroom. All Ontarians 18+ eligible for COVID-19 booster appointments at three-month interval. December 15, 2021. Available at: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001352/all-ontarians-18-eligible-for-covid-19-booster-appointments-at-three-month-interval>
2. Ministry of Health. COVID-19 vaccine third dose recommendations- Version 5.0. December 14, 2021. Available at: [https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19\\_vaccine\\_third\\_dose\\_recommendations.pdf](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19_vaccine_third_dose_recommendations.pdf)
3. Government of Canada. NACI updated guidance on booster COVID-19 vaccine doses in Canada. December 17, 2021. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-booster-covid-19-vaccine-doses.html>

**For more information, please contact:**

Name/Title: Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Associate Medical Officer of Health  
Email: [matthew.tenenbaum@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:matthew.tenenbaum@wdgpublichealth.ca)  
Website: [www.wdgpublichealth.ca](http://www.wdgpublichealth.ca)