

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Vaccine Interchangeability & Priority Second Doses
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To: Primary Care Providers and Pharmacists
From: Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Associate Medical Officer of Health

COVID-19 Vaccine Interchangeability

Following the emerging evidence on the risk of vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT) associated with the use of viral vector vaccines, the Public Health Agency asked National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI) to provide recommendations on the use of a mixed two-dose primary series schedule for COVID-19 immunization. NACI conducted a review of the evidence on the safety and immunogenicity of mixed schedules of mRNA and viral vector COVID-19 vaccines and provided two recommendations on vaccine interchangeability:

- **NACI recommends when the first dose is an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna), the same mRNA COVID-19 vaccine product should be offered for the second dose.** However, when the same mRNA COVID-19 vaccine produce is not readily available, or is unknown, another mRNA COVID-19 vaccine product recommended for use in that age group can be considered interchangeable and should be offered to complete the vaccine series. The previous dose should be counted, and the series need not be restarted.
- **NACI recommends when the first dose is the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccine that either AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD OR an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) may be offered for the subsequent dose in a vaccine series.** The previous dose should be counted, and the series need not be restarted.¹

Official recommendations for Ontario are pending.

Prioritization for Second Doses - May to August 2021

Ontario has already begun prioritizing second doses to certain groups including individuals with certain health conditions,² high-risk health care workers,³ and First Nations, Inuit and Metis individuals.

Table 1: Prioritization for Second Doses - May to August 2021⁴

Type of Vaccine	Eligibility Criteria
AstraZeneca/ COVISHIELD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 12 weeks have passed since the individual's first dose
Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna	<p>As of May 31, 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who are 80 years of age or older; AND At least 4 weeks have passed since the first dose. <p>As of June 14, 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who are 70 years of age or older; AND At least 4 weeks have passed since the first dose. <p>As of June 28, 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who received their first dose during the period of March 8 to April 18, 2021 <p>As of July 19, 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who received their first dose during the period of April 19 to May 9, 2021 <p>As of August 2, 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who received their first dose during the period of May 10 to May 30, 2021 <p>As of August 9, 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All other individuals who received their first dose from May 31 onwards; AND At least 4 weeks have passed since the first dose.

Second dose appointment booking information is available on the WDGPH website at:

<https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/appointments>.

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References

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2. Ministry of Health. Medical exceptions to extended dose intervals for COVID-19 vaccines. 2021 May 25. Available at: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID_19_medical_exceptions_vaccine_dose_intervals.pdf
3. Government of Ontario. High-risk health care workers eligible to receive a second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at a shortened interval. 2021 May 10. Available at: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/backgrounder/1000089/high-risk-health-care-workers-eligible-to-receive-a-second-dose-of-the-covid-19-vaccine-at-a-shortened-interval>
4. Government of Ontario. Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan: Getting your second dose. Updated 2021 May 28. Available at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/ontarios-covid-19-vaccination-plan#getting-your-second-dose>.

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