

To: Primary Care Providers and Hospitals
Subject: COVID-19 Vaccine Third Dose Recommendations
Date: September 15, 2021

Updated Eligibility Criteria

The Ontario Ministry of Health has updated the [COVID-19 Vaccine Third Dose Recommendations](#) to include a broader range of immunocompromised individuals. The following individuals should receive a third dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine authorized for their age group:

- Individuals receiving active treatment (e.g., chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy) for solid tumour or hematologic malignancies (active treatment includes patients who have completed treatment within 3 months)
- Recipients of solid-organ transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy
- Recipients of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-T-cell therapy or hematopoietic stem cell transplant (within 2 years of transplantation or taking immunosuppression therapy)
- Individuals with moderate to severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g., DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Individuals with stage 3 or advanced untreated HIV infection and those with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
- Individuals receiving active treatment with the following categories of immunosuppressive therapies: anti-B cell therapies (monoclonal antibodies targeting CD19, CD20 and CD22), high-dose systemic corticosteroids (refer to the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#) for suggested definition of high dose steroids), alkylating agents, antimetabolites, or tumor-necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors and other biologic agents that are significantly immunosuppressive (active treatment for patients receiving B-cell depleting therapy includes patients who have completed treatment within 12 months)

Note that third doses for eligible patients should be considered as an addition to the primary series (i.e., not as a booster dose). Additionally, this constitutes an off-label use of the vaccine.

Clinical Considerations

A third dose should be provided using an approved mRNA vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna). Where possible, an eligible patient should receive the same vaccine product; however, a different mRNA vaccine can be used. Eligible patients should receive their third dose at least two months (8 weeks) after their second dose with a minimum interval of 28 days. Immunization should be timed to optimize the patient's immune response and to minimize delays in the management of their underlying condition. For more information, review the [Physician Advisory from August 18, 2021](#).

For guidance on the timing of vaccination for transplant recipients and those requiring immunosuppressive therapies refer to [Immunization of Immunocompromised Persons: Canadian Immunization Guide](#).

Primary care providers and specialists who are familiar with their patients' medical histories are best positioned to identify and immunize eligible clients. If you are unable to administer vaccine to your eligible patients, you may refer them to be immunized at a WDGPH clinic. To have your patients vaccinated:

1. Complete and sign the attached UPDATED referral form and provide a copy to your patient. **Your patient must bring a copy of the signed form with them to their appointment.**
2. Direct them to book an appointment at a WDGPH clinic: wdgpublichealth.ca/appointments. Alternatively, patients may drop-in without an appointment. Clinic dates, locations and times are available on WDGPH's website: wdgpublichealth.ca/drop-ins.
3. If you fax a signed and completed referral form to **1-855-934-5463**, WDGPH will contact your patient directly to book them into a clinic.

Immunosuppressed Homebound Patients

For eligible homebound patients, check the appropriate box on the referral form and fax these forms to WDGPH (**1-855-934-5463**).

Individuals With Two Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine Not Approved By Health Canada

The Ontario Ministry of Health has also updated its [guidance](#) to align with the Public Health Agency of Canada's [COVID-19 recommendations for those vaccinated with vaccines not authorized by Health Canada for those staying in Canada to live, work or study](#).

Individuals who have proof of immunization and have received a complete one or two-dose series of a COVID-19 vaccine that is not authorized for use by Health Canada should be offered one additional dose of an mRNA vaccine.

- The minimum interval between the preceding dose and the additional dose should be 28 days.
- If the individual has already received three doses of a non-Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccine at the appropriate interval, no additional doses should be offered at this time.

Individuals who have proof of immunization and have received an incomplete series of a non-Health Canada authorized vaccine, should receive one additional dose of an mRNA vaccine.

- The minimum interval between the preceding dose and the additional dose should be 28 days.

For more information, review Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Guidance for Individuals Vaccinated Outside of Ontario/Canada](#).

Prior to receiving third dose, these individuals must ensure they have completed the [out-of-province COVID-19 vaccine submission form](#) to ensure their vaccination record is documented in COVax.

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