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COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #38

Preferential Recommendation for Pfizer-BioNTech in Those ≤ 25 Years and Coadministration of COVID-19 Vaccine and Other Vaccines

Attention: Physicians, Emergency Departments, Hospital CEOs, Hospital Laboratories, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse and Nurse Practitioners, EMS, Designated Officers, Midwives, Family Health Teams, Pharmacies, Central LHIN, NSM LHIN, Beausoleil First Nation, Moose Deer Point First Nation, Rama First Nation, Wahta First Nation, Long-term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Hospices, Coroners, Funeral Directors, Dentists, Group Homes, Homes for Special Care, Optometrists, Corrections, Municipalities, Licensed Child Care Providers

Date: September 29, 2021

Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine (COMIRNATY™) Recommended for Those Under 25 Years of Age Preferentially Over Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine (Spikevax®)

Out of an abundance of caution, Ontario is issuing a preferential recommendation for the use of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine over Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for individuals under 25 years of age effective immediately based on the current available analysis from Ontario's adverse events following immunization (AEFI) surveillance system.

This recommendation is based on the advice of Ontario's Children COVID-19 Vaccine Table, Ontario Vaccine Clinical Advisory Group, and Public Health Ontario and is due to an [observed increase in Ontario in pericarditis/myocarditis](#), though still rare, following vaccination with Moderna compared to Pfizer-BioNTech in the 18 to 24 year old age group, particularly among males. The majority of reported cases have been mild with individuals recovering quickly, normally with anti-inflammatory medication. Symptoms have typically been reported to start within one week after vaccination, more commonly after the second dose.

The highest reporting rate of myocarditis/pericarditis was observed in males aged 18-24 years following second dose, where the reporting rate following the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was 37.4 per million doses and was 263.2 per million following the Moderna vaccine.

It is important to note that the risk of developing myocarditis or pericarditis or other cardiac related complications following COVID-19 infection is 18 times higher than baseline. The benefits of COVID-19 vaccine continue to outweigh the risks associated with this rare adverse event. COVID-19 vaccines continue to be recommended and are highly effective at preventing symptomatic infection and severe outcomes from COVID-19 disease, which is also associated with a risk of myocarditis.

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It is recommended that those under 25 who received Moderna for their first dose receive Pfizer-BioNTech for their second dose. Should individuals aged 18- to 24-year-old wish to receive Moderna they can continue to do so with informed consent. The province will continue using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for youth ages 12-17 (including those turning 12 in 2021).

Coadministration of COVID-19 Vaccine and Other Vaccines

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) [announced yesterday](#) that COVID-19 vaccine can now be given at the same time or at any time before or after receiving other vaccines including live, non-live, adjuvanted or unadjuvanted vaccines. As a precaution, NACI previously recommended that COVID-19 vaccines be given at least 28 days before and 14 days after other vaccines. After reviewing the evolving evidence on COVID-19 vaccines and considering the extensive data and experience of giving other routine vaccines at the same time or within days of each other, NACI has determined that a precautionary approach is no longer necessary. This is good news as we head into the Fall as it means that those who need COVID-19 vaccine can receive it at the same visit as their flu shot, or other vaccines they may be eligible for.

Third Doses for Seniors Living in Congregate Settings

NACI also [announced yesterday](#) a recommendation for third doses to be given to seniors living in long-term care homes and other seniors congregate settings based on increased risk of infection and severe disease and due to signs that protection might not persist as long in these individuals as in other populations in Canada. Of note in the recommendation, is the reference to third doses being provided at an interval of at least 6 months after their second dose. For now, the provincial direction of providing doses at the recommended 5 month interval stands, and we are awaiting more information on the implementation of third doses for remaining retirement homes and other seniors congregate settings.

For immunization program information, support materials and forms refer to our website

www.smdhu.org/pcportal or call the Immunization program, Monday thru Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at 705-721-7520 or toll free 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8806.

Additional COVID-19 Vaccine Information

For more information about the rollout of COVID-19 vaccine in our area, please refer to the SMDHU [COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunization](#) webpages.

For more information on the province's three-phased vaccine distribution implementation plan, please visit [COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario](#).

There are a number of COVID-19 resources and documents available through our Health Professional Portal at www.smdhu.org/hpportal as well as through [Public Health Ontario](#) and the [Government of Ontario](#).