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COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #57

Recent COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance Updates, New Grey Cap Pfizer Product for 12+ and Preparation for Fall COVID-19 Vaccination

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: August 31, 2022

Recent COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance Updates

- 5 to 11-year-olds are now eligible to receive a booster dose 6 months following their last dose. With informed consent, this can be given at a minimum of 3 months from their last dose.
- Severely or moderately immunocompromised 12- to 17-year-olds are now eligible for 2nd boosters (5th dose) ≥6 months (168 days) after their 1st booster dose. This interval may be associated with a lower risk of myocarditis with or without pericarditis. With informed consent, these individuals may receive a 2nd booster dose at a minimum of 3 months (84 days) after their 1st booster dose.
- The National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI) recently updated their recommendation that COVID-19 vaccines may be given on the same day or at any interval with other vaccines for those 5 years of age and older (previously 12 years and older). At this time co-administration of COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines is not recommended for those 6 months through 4 years (as a precaution), rather a 14-day interval continues to be recommended in this age group.

New Grey Cap Formulation of COMIRNATY® (Pfizer-BioNTech) for Vaccine for 12+

The original purple cap formulation of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for 12+ has been replaced by a new grey cap formulation **which no longer requires dilution**. The new grey cap formulation is available as follows:

- 6 dose vial
- Unpunctured vials are stable at 2 - 8°C for up to 10 weeks once thawed
- Vials are stable for 12 hours after first puncture



This new formulation will be more user friendly for health care providers for opportunistic vaccination in their practices or facilities.

Fall COVID-19 Vaccination

As fall approaches, it is important that we all be prepared for an anticipated fall COVID-19 Vaccine Booster program as well as the annual Influenza vaccine program. Ensuring that our community is protected against both will decrease the risk of co-infection. While we are awaiting final approvals and timelines, the following is what we can expect for fall:

- Comirnaty (Pfizer-BioNTech) vaccine approval for 6 months to 5 years.
- Bivalent COVID-19 vaccine boosters (containing both original COVID-19 strain and Omicron BA.1 strain) will be available likely sometime in the latter part of September for those 18+ starting with those most at risk. Based on vaccine supply prioritization, it may take until November or December for those at lowest risk to be eligible to receive the vaccine. The minimum and recommended intervals are still being discussed and determined by the province.

The health unit will continue offering clinics in all health unit offices and pop-up clinics as we are able to, but as we have resumed other immunization activities our capacity for such will be limited. Primary care providers are encouraged to offer COVID-19 vaccine in addition to flu vaccine for their patients. If you have previously been set up in COVAX and need a password reset, please email covaxsupport@smdhu.org. If you have not previously offered COVID-19 vaccine in your practice and would like to onboard now to offer the vaccine, please email vaccineorders@smdhu.org and one of our staff will be in contact.

The following options for COVID-19 vaccination continue and will be available through the fall:

- [Local pharmacies](#).
- Health Unit office-based clinics throughout Simcoe Muskoka - appointments available through the [Provincial Vaccine Appointment Booking System](#).
- Community clinic at Georgian Mall in Barrie - appointments available through the [Provincial Vaccine Appointment Booking System](#) – walk-ins may be accommodated based on demand.
- [RVH COVID-19 vaccination clinic](#) at 29 Sperling Drive in Barrie – appointments available through the Provincial Vaccine Appointment Booking System and walk ins may be accommodated based on demand.
- [Couchiching OHT COVID-19 vaccination clinic](#) in Orillia at OSMH Kiwanis Building - West Entrance, 170 Colborne St. West.
- GO-VAXX bus throughout Simcoe Muskoka – to access the schedule [click here](#).

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.

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