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COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #64

COVID-19 Vaccination Updates & Launch of Spring Booster Campaign

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, Ontario Health Central, 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: April 6, 2023

The Ministry of Health has launched a spring COVID-19 vaccine booster program for the following high-risk populations, who are recommended to receive a spring booster if it has been **at least 6 months** (168 days) since their last dose or infection:

- Adults 65 years of age or older.
- Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges, and other congregate living settings for seniors.
- Individuals 18 years of age and older living in congregate care settings for people with complex medical care needs.
- Pregnant individuals.
- Adults 18 years of age and older who are moderately or severely immunocompromised.
- Individuals 55 years of age and older who identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Metis and their non-Indigenous household members aged 55 years of age and older.

Note: the previous 3-month minimum interval between boosters no longer applies, regardless of risk factors.

At this time, for the general public 5 years of age and older, it is recommended to have a primary series and receipt of at least a booster dose (monovalent or bivalent) on or after September 1st, 2022. An additional spring booster is not recommended for those not in the above high-risk groups. If someone outside of the above groups wants an additional spring booster, they can receive it with informed consent at a minimum 6-month interval from their last dose or infection.



Recommendations for future doses will be issued closer to fall 2023. This is because of emerging evidence around the strength and durability of protection against severe COVID-19 disease in people with hybrid immunity (previous COVID-19 infection and COVID-19 vaccine), the high proportion of the population previously infected with COVID-19, as well as the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in 2023.

It is important to continue to recommend vaccination for anyone who has not received a primary series, or those who are outside the above risk groups that have not received a booster dose on or after September 1st, 2022, to ensure ongoing protection.

Discontinuation of GOVAXX Services

We have received notification from the Ministry that the GOVAXX services will no longer be available effective April 1st, 2023. The health unit will continue to provide office clinics, pop-up clinics, and targeted clinics throughout the community based on demand and need. All clinic locations are kept up-to-date on our [Get Vaccinated](#) page.

For those wanting non-mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

The health unit continues to offer monthly clinics for Novavax and Janssen COVID-19 vaccines. Anyone who is not able to or willing to receive mRNA vaccines can complete [the online form](#), and one of our staff will follow up with them to book an appointment for them.

Changing Given Name to Chosen Name in COVAX

The health unit will soon be able to update COVAX for trans, non-binary, two-spirit, and gender diverse people who have not updated their health card with their chosen name but would like to have their proof of vaccine certificate reflect their chosen name. It is expected that this functionality will be available in mid-April. Once launched, we will have an online form that people can complete and upload the required documentation to review. Please direct any clients who may be interested in this to our website, or to call Health Connection for more information.

For more information:

For more detailed information about eligibility and guidance, please refer to the [Ministry of Health COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#) document.

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](#) as well as through [Public Health Ontario](#) and the [Government of Ontario](#).

To help you determine the best ways to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 infection and serious illness, refer to the SMDHU [COVID-19 Community Risk Tool](#).

Is it time for your next COVID-19 booster?

Use the chart below if you have completed your primary series and are aged 5 and older.



Notes

- * If you tested positive for COVID-19 (on a rapid home test or another test) OR had symptoms after being in close contact with someone you live with that had tested positive, you should wait 6 months before getting a booster dose. If you are not sure if you had COVID-19, get a booster dose.

March 2023

Ontario 

Source: [COVID-19 Vaccine Guide](#), Version 6.0.