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COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #65

Recommendation to Delay COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters until Fall, Bivalent Vaccine for Primary Series & Discontinuation of Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine in Canada

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: July 10, 2023

As per the Ministry of Health, **effective immediately individuals should consider delaying receipt of a COVID-19 booster dose until the fall.** This is to ensure individuals will meet the expected 6-month recommended interval from their last dose. Receiving a booster dose in the fall, heading into respiratory illness season, will also maximize protection against COVID-19 outcomes when peak circulation of the virus is expected.

The decision to receive a booster dose prior to fall 2023 may be appropriate for certain individuals based on their unique health status and personal situation. Booster doses will continue to be available at SMDHU COVID-19 vaccine clinics to those who want to receive a booster dose before fall with informed consent of the above recommendation, provided they are at least 6 months from their last dose of COVID-19 vaccine or COVID-19 infection.

Discontinuation of JCOVDEN (Janssen) COVID-19 Vaccine in Canada

Janssen Inc. has submitted a voluntary recall to Health Canada for the JCOVDEN (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine and requested cancellation of the DIN for this product. According to Janssen, the decision to withdraw this product from use in Canada is a business decision and is NOT the result of any health or safety concerns related to the vaccine. As Janssen and Health Canada have indicated post-market surveillance of the product has been discontinued, the Ministry recommends an immediate discontinuation of the use of JCOVDEN (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine and to consider other available COVID-19 vaccines. This vaccine is no longer available at SMDHU clinics.



While Nuvaxovid (Novavax) COVID-19 vaccine, continues to be authorized for use in Canada, there is currently no supply available. Novavax is a protein-based vaccine available for those 12 years of age and older who are not willing or able to receive mRNA vaccines. Those wanting to access this vaccine at a health unit are encouraged to continue to check our [website](#) for availability.

Administering Bivalent COVID-19 Vaccines for Primary Series

In accordance with interim recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), Ontario is now using Bivalent COVID-19 vaccines for primary series doses. Use of bivalent mRNA vaccines to initiate or complete the primary series is considered off-label but is supported by NACI. Bivalent mRNA vaccines also continue to be recommended for all booster doses.

Interim recommendations for bivalent COVID-19 mRNA vaccines based on age, dosage, & schedule

Age	Recommended Intervals ²	Minimum Intervals
6 months - 4 years	Primary Series Bivalent Moderna (25 mcg) • 2 nd dose, 56 days after 1 st dose	Primary Series Bivalent Moderna (25 mcg) • 2 nd dose, 28 days after 1 st dose
	Booster Doses – not eligible	
5-11 years	Primary Series Bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (10 mcg)/ Bivalent Moderna (25 mcg) • 2 nd dose, 56 days after 1 st dose	Primary Series Bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (10 mcg)/ Bivalent Moderna (25 mcg) • 2 nd dose, 28 days after 1 st dose
	Booster Doses: Bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (10 mcg)³/Bivalent Moderna (25 mcg) 6 months (168 days) after last dose or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection	
12 years +	Primary Series Bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg) ⁴ / Bivalent Moderna (50 mcg) • 2 nd dose, 56 days after 1 st dose	Primary Series Bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg)/ Bivalent Moderna (50 mcg) • 2 nd dose, 28 days after 1 st dose
	Booster Doses Bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg)/ Bivalent Moderna (50 mcg) • 6 months (168 days) ⁵ after last dose or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection	Booster Doses Bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg) • 3 months (84 days) after last dose or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection Bivalent Moderna (50 mcg) • 4 months (112 days) after last dose or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection
Immuno-compromised 6 months+	An additional dose is required to complete the primary series. The recommended interval is 56 days (minimum 28 days) from the 2 nd dose.	

¹ Interim recommendation as per NACI is to use bivalent mRNA vaccines off-label to initiate or complete the primary series. Informed consent is always required for vaccines under the Health Care Consent Act and express consent is required when a vaccine is being offered off-label. Bivalent mRNA vaccines continue to be recommended for use as booster doses.

² Longer intervals between the first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccines result in more robust and durable immune response and higher vaccine effectiveness.

³ Bivalent Pfizer (10 mcg) is the only authorized bivalent booster for those 5 years of age.

⁴ Bivalent Pfizer is preferred for those 12-29 years of age initiating or completing the primary series due to lower risk of myocarditis and/or pericarditis.

⁵ The recommended interval is 6 months; however, vaccine administrators may use their clinical discretion to decide on administration prior to the 6-month interval.

Interim recommendations for bivalent COVID-19 mRNA vaccine product preferences by age & immune status

	Age	Product Preference (mcg/mL)
Primary Series	6 months to 4 years	Bivalent Moderna (25 mcg/0.25 mL) is the recommended and only bivalent product for this age group ⁶
	5 to 11 years ⁷	No preference between bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (10 mcg/0.2 mL) or bivalent Moderna (25 mcg/0.25 mL)
	12 to 29 years ⁸	Bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg/0.3 mL)
	30 years and older ⁷	No preference between bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg/0.3 mL) or bivalent Moderna (50 mcg/0.5 mL)
Booster Doses	6 months to 4 years	Not eligible for booster doses
	5 years	Bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (10 mcg/0.2 mL) is the only authorized bivalent product for this age group
	6 to 11 years	No preference between bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (10 mcg/0.2 mL) or bivalent Moderna (25 mcg/0.25 mL)
	12 years and older	No preference between bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech (30 mcg/0.3 mL) or bivalent Moderna (50 mcg/0.5 mL)

⁶ Currently, there is no bivalent Pfizer product available in Canada for individuals 6 months to 4 years of age.

⁷ Individuals 6 months and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised may benefit from a primary series with bivalent Moderna (25 mcg in 6 months-11 years, 50 mcg in those 12 years and older) compared to bivalent Pfizer (10 mcg in 5 -11 years, 30 mcg in those 12 years and older).

⁸ For individuals 12 to 29 years of age, bivalent Pfizer (30 mcg) vaccine is preferred due to the lower risk of myocarditis and/or pericarditis, however, for some moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals, administration of the bivalent Moderna (50 mcg) may be considered based on individual clinician judgement and informed consent.

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](#) at 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](#).