

Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Colin Lee, Associate Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Lisa Simon, Associate Medical Officer of Health

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Attention: Physicians, Nurse and Nurse Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Infection Prevention & Control Practitioners, Hospital Pharmacies, Hospital Occupational Health Nurses, Midwives, EMS, Community Health Centres, Family Health Teams, Ontario Health Teams, Ontario Health Central, Indigenous Health Care & Community, Corrections Facilities, Participating Health Care Agencies, Long-Term Care Facilities, Retirement Homes

Date: September 27, 2024

The Ontario COVID-19 Vaccine program is recommending all previously vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals (6 months of age and older) receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine this Fall. Receiving an updated vaccine is expected to offer additional protection against SARS-CoV-2 infection and severe COVID-19 disease since the strains in the updated vaccines are likely to be more closely related to circulating strains. The additional dose is also expected to increase immunity that has waned over time.

The new formulation of COVID-19 vaccine will start to become available in local pharmacies the week of September 30th, but it is estimated to take up to two weeks before it is widely available. For health care providers and facilities who order vaccine through public health, you can submit orders using the revised [COVID-19 Vaccine order form](#). Orders received by Wednesday October 2nd at 3pm will be ready for pick up on Wednesday October 9th.

An updated COVID-19 vaccine is strongly recommended for the following high-risk and priority populations, as soon as the vaccine is available:

- Adults 65 years and older
- Individuals 6 months of age and older who are/have:
 - Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, and other congregate living settings
 - Pregnant
 - From First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities
 - Members of racialized and other equity-deserving communities
 - [Underlying medical conditions](#) that place them at higher risk for severe disease, including children with complex health needs
 - To optimize co-administration with influenza vaccine, children 6 months to 4 years of age, health care workers, first responders, individuals with significant exposure to birds and mammals (such as poultry, livestock, slaughterhouse and processing plant workers, wildlife officers/researchers, and veterinarians) should also be prioritized to receive COVID-19 and influenza vaccines as soon as vaccine becomes available this fall



Starting October 28, 2024, all other previously vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals (6 months of age and older) who are not listed above, are recommended to and may receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine. Of note, people who provide essential community services are particularly recommended to receive COVID-19 vaccine.

Most people (all of those 6 months and older who are previously vaccinated and those not previously vaccinated who are 5 years and older and not immunocompromised) need one dose of KP.2 formulation this fall. For previously vaccinated individuals the recommended interval is 6 months from the last COVID-19 vaccine dose, and a minimum of 3 months from the last dose may be used. This minimum interval of 3 months will ensure that those who received a spring 2024 dose (which includes those who are most at risk for severe disease) will be eligible for an updated fall 2024 dose. Individuals/immunizers may consider delaying COVID-19 immunization by 3 to 6 months in circumstances where recent test-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection is known for previously vaccinated individuals.

For children 6 months through 4 years or anyone 6 months and older who is [moderately to severely immunocompromised](#) who has not completed a primary series previously, refer to table 3 in the [Ministry of Health for HCP Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Vaccine](#) for details on how to complete their series.

Ontario will have two mRNA COVID-19 vaccines for the 2024/2025 season, Moderna and Pfizer, both targeting the Omicron KP.2 variant. Moderna will be available for those 6 months of age and older, and Pfizer will be available for those 12 years and older.

The updated protein subunit COVID-19 vaccine, Novavax will not be available in Ontario for the 2024/2025 season. Individuals who are unable to receive an mRNA vaccine, should speak with their health care provider about treatment options, including the use of Paxlovid, to reduce the duration and severity of illness.

Co-Administration

COVID-19 vaccines may be given at the same time with other vaccines, or at any time before or after other non-COVID-19 vaccines (live or non-live vaccines), including influenza vaccine, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine and/or the RSV monoclonal antibody, Beyfortus.

Ordering Information for Health Care Providers and Facilities

All doses of COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario must be documented in the COVAXon system. If you have new staff in your facility or accounts that need to be reset, please email covaxsupport@smdhu.org. Existing users who forget their password can change their password in the system directly.

When documenting in COVAXon, please ensure all client information is up to date. This is especially important for residents for long-term care and retirement homes; update the reason for immunization to LTCH Rhome resident and include the institution name where the client is living.

The health unit is no longer hosting COVID-19 vaccine clinics for the general population. People can access COVID-19 vaccine from a local pharmacy, LTCH/Rhome/Hospital where applicable or their family doctor. The health unit will be supporting some outreach clinics for targeted groups and will have a limited number of appointments available for children under 5 years of age if they are unable to locate a pharmacy in their area that is providing the vaccine to young children.

While COVID-19 vaccine will start to arrive at local pharmacies the week of September 30th, it may take up to two weeks before it is widely available. The [COVID-19 Pharmacy locator tool](#) on the Ministry website will be updated the week of September 30th. While this locator tool is specific to COVID vaccines, most pharmacies who are offering COVID will also offer Flu vaccine.

COVID-19 Vaccines			
Vaccine name	Moderna		Pfizer
Brand name	Spikevax		Comirnaty
Protection against	Omicron KP.2 variant		Omicron KP.2 variant
Manufacturer	Moderna Biopharma Canada Corporation		BioNTech Manufacturing GmbH
Vaccine type	Monovalent COVID-19 mRNA*		Monovalent COVID-19 mRNA*
Age indication	6 months to 11 years	12 years and older	12 years of age and older
Dosage	0.25 mL/25 ug	0.5 mL/50 ug	0.3 mL/30 mcg
Route	Intramuscular (IM)		Intramuscular (IM)
Format	Multidose vial (MDV)		Multidose vial (MDV)
Vial volume	2.5 mL		1.8 mL
# of doses per vial	10 (0.25mL) doses 5 (0.5 mL) doses		6 doses
Unpunctured self life (thawed vials)	50 days at +2°C to +8°C 12 hours at +8°C to +25°C Do not refreeze thawed vials		10 weeks at +2°C to +8°C 12 hours at +8°C to +25°C Do not refreeze thawed vials
Post-puncture shelf life	24 hours at +2°C to +8°C 12 hours at +8°C to +25°C		12 hours at +2°C to +25°C
Package dimension	5.4 x 13.8 x 6.1 cm		3.7 x 4.7 x 8.9 cm
DIN	02541270		02541823
Product monograph	https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00077065.PDF		https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00077149.PDF

* Messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA)

For more information refer to the [Ministry of Health for HCP Fact Sheet for COVID-19 Vaccine](#).
 For more information, please visit our website at www.smdhu.org/hpportal or contact the Immunization Program at 705-721-7520 or toll free at 1-877-721-7520.

- For questions regarding vaccine orders: ext. 8808 or vaccineorders@smdhu.org
- For all other HCP questions: ext. 8806 or hc.vpd@smdhu.org