

Short Dated Merck Vaccine Diluent

Attention: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Long-Term Care Homes, Rest & Retirement Homes, Walk-in Clinics, Hospitals, Hospital Pharmacies, Correctional Facilities, Rama Health Centre, Beausoleil Health Centre, Central LHIN, NSM LHIN

Date: June 18, 2019

Due to a shortage from vaccine manufacturers the Ontario Government Pharmacy is currently distributing diluent with short expiry dates (diluent expiring prior to the vaccine).

Currently this only applies to Merck products (M-M-R® II, ProQuad®, Varivax® and Zostavax®). This situation is expected to continue until at least August 2019.

The Canadian Immunization Guide states:

- For optimal potency, lyophilized (freeze-dried) vaccines should be reconstituted immediately before use with the diluent provided by the manufacturer for that purpose.

Merck and GSK diluents are not to be used interchangeably.

While both Merck and GSK diluents are labelled as “sterile water”, they contain different volumes; GSK ampoules are 0.5 ml and Merck vials are 0.7 ml.

Using the incorrect diluent when reconstituting a vaccine can result in the vaccine being too dilute or too potent. This can alter the effectiveness of the vaccine provided, potentially leaving clients vulnerable to preventable diseases.

Please remain diligent when preparing vaccines and verify the expiry of both the diluent and the vaccine prior to administration.

If you have any questions, please contact the Immunization Program at 705-721-7520 or toll free at 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8806.

