

COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #29

Updated Guidance on Second Dose for Youth, Mixing mRNA Vaccines and Pfizer-BioNTech Supply Update

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: June 23, 2021

Second Doses for Adolescents and Youth Ages 12 to 25 (Including Those That are Post-Secondary or International Students)

We are awaiting further updates from the Ministry of Health regarding second dose interval for this age group. At this time, the Provincial Vaccine Appointment Booking System (PVAB) will allow those 18+, without any other eligibility criteria, to book their second dose appointments according to the same timelines as adults over 25. Effective Wednesday June 23rd, for residents of Simcoe Muskoka this will be any adults immunized on or before May 30th will be eligible for their second dose.

The Ministry has not yet accelerated the second dose interval timing for youth age 12 through 17 years, from the original timeline of August 9th to 22nd. At this time, the only exceptions for youth 12 through 17 years for earlier second dose continue as follows:

- Youth who are First Nation, Inuit or Metis (including non-Indigenous household members)
- Youth who have one of the identified high-risk health conditions making them eligible for an earlier second dose: dialysis patients, cancer patients on active treatment, transplant recipients, those taking anti-CD 20 agent medications
- Youth who are [high-risk health care worker](#) (i.e. working in a Long Term Care Home)
- Youth in Simcoe Muskoka who are agricultural workers

For youth who received their first dose at one of our mass immunization clinics whose second dose is currently booked beyond August, they will be able to move their appointment up to the August window in the coming weeks.



Mixing mRNA Products

A [guidance document](#) released over the weekend from the province provided the following additional messaging and guidance for mixing mRNA vaccines:

- It is crucial for all individuals to complete their vaccine series with a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to receive the optimal level of protection. Data from clinical trials and real-world studies clearly demonstrate that a complete two-dose vaccine series provides enhanced protection against COVID-19.
- The increased circulation of the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant of concern further emphasizes the importance of ensuring second doses are further accelerated for people living in Ontario.
- NACI recommends that, if readily available*, the same mRNA COVID-19 vaccine product should be offered for the subsequent dose in a vaccine series started with a mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. However, when the same mRNA COVID-19 vaccine product is not readily available*, or is unknown, another mRNA COVID-19 vaccine product recommended for use in that age group can be considered and should be offered to complete the vaccine series.
*readily available = easily available at the time of vaccination without delay or vaccine wastage.
- Patients should understand which product they are receiving, have the opportunity to ask questions and understand the risk of delaying their second dose.
- This is not a new concept. Similar vaccines from different manufacturers are used when vaccine supply or public health programs change. Foundational vaccine principles indicate that similar vaccines, from different manufacturers can be substituted when:
 - they are authorized for the same purpose;
 - for the same populations;
 - have similar schedules;
 - have similar or produce similar type(s) of antigens and are similar in terms of vaccine safety, immune responses and protection provided.
- In line with basic principles of vaccinology, it is expected that combining different COVID-19 vaccines that induce an immune response against the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein will lead to a robust immune response.
- There is no reason to believe that mRNA vaccine series completed with a different authorized mRNA vaccine product would result in any additional safety issues or reduction in immune protection against COVID-19 at this time (NACI).

People who are Imminently Starting Immunosuppression or Awaiting Transplant

The Vaccine Clinical Advisory Group (VCAG) Recommendations on Exceptions to Extended Dose Intervals for COVID-19 vaccines document was recently updated to indicate that individuals in the authorized age groups for a COVID-19 vaccine for whom transplant or dialysis initiation is imminent, or whose cancer treatment (excluding solely radiation or hormonal therapy) or anti-CD20 agent therapy, is to be imminently initiated, are recommended to work with their treating provider to determine the timing of their vaccine in accordance with the product monograph

interval in order to optimize the immune response from the vaccine series and minimize delays in management of their underlying condition.

Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Delay in Early July

As per media reports, our supply of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for the first two weeks in July has been impacted significantly by a delay and reduction. We will therefore be transitioning to providing Moderna vaccine to those 18+ who are eligible, to conserve our supply of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for youth 12 to 17 who are not authorized to receive Moderna vaccine.

For immunization program information, support materials and forms refer to our website

www.smdhu.org/pcportal or call the Immunization program, Monday thru Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at 705-721-7520 or toll free 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8806.

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.

For more information on the province's three-phased vaccine distribution implementation plan, please visit [COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario](#).

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