

**From:** Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, Chief Medical Officer of Health

**To:** Pharmacists, Physicians and Other Primary Care Providers

**Re:** COVID-19 Vaccine Update

**Date:** April 13, 2022

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On April 5, 2022, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) provided updated recommendations on offering a second dose for certain populations: [naci-guidance-second-booster-dose-covid-19-vaccines.pdf \(canada.ca\)](#).

Targeted populations for offering a second booster dose include:

- Adults 70 years of age and over living in the community;
- All residents living in long-term care or other senior congregate living facilities
- Individuals 18 years of age and older that identify as Indigenous or live in remote/isolated communities

Individuals in these categories are at an increased risk in the context of protection against severe disease potentially decreasing over time following the first booster dose, and/or risk of immune evasion by highly transmissible variants of concern which can cause severe disease.

The second booster dose should be administered at a minimum of 20 weeks after the first booster dose was administered. It is important to note that the interval for first booster dose is a minimum of 22 weeks from primary series completion.

Based on current NACI recommendations, individuals in the categories mentioned above should receive either Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty or Moderna Spikevax vaccine for their second booster dose. When using Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty vaccine, 30mcg (0.3mls) should be administered. When using Moderna Spikevax vaccine as the booster dose, 50mcg (0.25mLs) should be administered.

In addition, NACI has added a new recommendation for first booster doses for adolescents 12- 17 years old: [NACI statement Updated guidance on a first booster dose of COVID-19 vaccines in Canada](#). Along with the January 2022 recommendations for first booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines for adolescents 12-17 years of age who may be at higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 infection, NACI is recommending that a booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may be offered to all other adolescents

12 to 17 years of age in the context of heightened (ongoing or novel) epidemiological risk.

The first booster dose should be administered at a minimum of 22 weeks after completion of the primary series.

The use of Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty (30 mcg) booster dose is preferred to Moderna Spikevax (50 mcg) booster dose as there are currently no data on the use of Moderna Spikevax booster dose in adolescents 12 to 17 years of age. Pharmacists, physicians and other primary care providers can now order Moderna and Pfizer vaccine for use in individuals 12 years of age and older.

It is important to note the different storage requirements for these vaccines:

- Moderna Spikevax vaccine is stable at +2°C to +8°C for up to 30 days. Once punctured, it must be utilized within **24 hours**.
- Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is available in a 6 dose vial and is stable at +2°C to +8°C for up to 31 days. This vaccine requires dilution with 1.8mLs for normal saline (which will be provided with the vaccine when ordered). The dose is 0.3mLs, regardless of whether the dose is considered part of the primary series or a booster. Once diluted, vaccine is considered stable for a maximum of **6 hours**. Consideration should be given to scheduling individuals that will receive Pfizer vaccine to avoid wastage as much as possible.

NACI continues to review recommendations for booster doses for other populations. Provincial recommendations will be shared on additional booster doses once developed.