

## COVID-19 second boosters

July 21, 2022

On July 13, 2022, Ontario expanded [eligibility for second booster doses](#) of the COVID-19 vaccine to all adults aged 18 and 59.

See below for answers to common questions you may receive about booster doses.

### 1) How do I advise my now-eligible patients who are considering second boosters?

The OCFP has developed this [website/email script](#) that may be adapted for your patients. Here are some of the considerations for getting a second booster now:

- For most healthy people aged 18 to 59, a fourth dose now may not be crucial. There is evidence that healthy people who received their third dose six months ago or earlier are still well protected from severe COVID-19 illness.
- It may be more beneficial for certain groups to get a second booster now – such as those with underlying health conditions (such as obesity, diabetes, pregnancy), essential workers, and based on personal circumstances (e.g., if they live with or are in frequent close contact with someone who is at risk for severe COVID-19 outcomes, since the vaccine reduces virus transmissibility).
- Of note, moderately or severely immunocompromised individuals **12 years of age and older as of July 28** are eligible for a second booster and may book as of July 28.

### 2) What is the recommended interval between the first booster and the second booster?

Longer intervals between doses have been shown to generate stronger immune response. In Ontario\*, an interval of five months is recommended between booster doses. The booster may be given as early as three months after the last dose – such as for people who are immunosuppressed, or in cases where the opportunity to vaccinate may not be there at the five-month mark.

People who have had COVID-19 infection should [wait three months](#) after the infection.

\* Note [Ontario recommends](#) (page 15) a five-month interval between boosters for people 18+ and six months for youth 12-17 years old, while [NACI recommends](#) (page 4) a space of six months for all ages.

### 3) If a patient gets the second booster now, will they be eligible to receive the Omicron-containing bivalent vaccine expected in the fall?

Patients who choose to receive a booster now may have to wait five months (three months if immune suppressed) before receiving another dose. At present, we do not know when and how widely the bivalent vaccine will be available.

**4) Are patients who do not receive a booster dose considered “fully vaccinated”?**

Yes, one is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after getting the second dose in a two-dose vaccine series, i.e., Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Novavax (can be mixed doses).

For those who are immunocompromised or otherwise at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID infection (see [Ministry guidance on boosters](#) pages 9-11), a complete vaccine series comprises three doses. See Appendix A of guidance for a list of immunosuppressive medications.

**5) What should I consider if I am vaccinating in my clinic?**

Considerations for vaccinating in your office may include office flow and capacity, as well as the ability to properly store and administer the vaccine. See the OMA's [in-office vaccination decision guide](#) and you can contact your [Public Health Unit](#) for vaccines.

You can find more details in the Ministry's guidance for [vaccine administration](#) and for [vaccine storage and handling](#), and here is summary information on vaccine storage and handling from [Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's Physicians Advisory](#), July 13, 2022:

*“The Moderna vaccine does not require pre-mixing, and after first puncture it can be stored at room temperature or refrigerated up to 24 hours. There is availability of 10 doses of 50 mcg/ml in a multi-dose vial. The Pfizer vaccine is stored frozen and requires pre-mixing of sodium chloride solution. After dilution the vial must be used within 6 hours and can be stored at room temperature. There is availability of 6 doses of 30 mcg/ml in a multi-dose vial.”*

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