

Doctors, scientists, pharmacists, and patients in Canada made this guide to help people understand booster doses for COVID-19 vaccines.





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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

COVID-19 VACCINE

For people 5 years and older

BOOSTER DOSES

More than 13 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been given around the world. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends a Fall 2022/Winter 2023 booster vaccine dose for people aged 5 and older.



• Why are Fall 2022/Winter 2023 COVID-19 booster doses recommended? COVID-19 boosters doses in Fall 2022/Winter 2023 will make sure that people have the strongest protection from infection, serious illness, and death.² Booster doses build back protection, and give more protection against new variants.^{2,3}

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON IMMUNIZATION

NACI STRONGLY recommends a Fall 2022/Winter 2023 COVID-19 booster for:3

- People 65 years and older
- People who are pregnant
- People 12+ who:
 - Identify as First Nations, Metis, Inuit
 - Belong to a racialized or marginalized community (e.g., living with disability)
 - Live in a group setting (e.g., long-term care)
- People 5+ who:
 - Haven't received a booster dose yet **AND**
 - Have a weakened immune system or serious health condition

Everyone 5 years and older can consider getting a Fall 2022/Winter 2023 COVID-19 booster dose.

Does it matter which bivalent vaccine I get? No. All bivalent booster vaccines give good protection against Omicron variants.

What are the new BIVALENT mRNA COVID-19 vaccines?

A "bivalent" vaccine targets 2 variants of a virus: the original COVID-19 virus and the Omicron strain.

Approved bivalent vaccines in Canada:



Moderna (Spikevax™)

COVID-19 mRNA bivalent vaccine

- For people 18 years and older
- Approved by Health Canada (Sept 2022)
- Targets original COVID-19 virus plus **Omicron BA.1**



Moderna (Spikevax™)

COVID-19 mRNA bivalent vaccine

- For people 18 years and older
- Approved by Health Canada (Nov 2022)
- Targets original COVID-19 virus plus Omicron BA.4/5



Pfizer (Comirnaty®)

COVID-19 mRNA bivalent vaccine

- For people 5 years and older
- Approved by Health Canada (Oct 2022)
- Targets original COVID-19 virus plus Omicron BA.4/5

Find the most recent NACI **guidance** here: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/ canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-26-covid-19-vaccine.html

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Which Fall 2022/Winter 2023 COVID-19 booster should I get?

Age	Preferred Booster Option	Alternative Booster Option
5 to 11 years	Additional dose of Pfizer (Comirnaty®) bivalent	Additional dose of Pfizer (Comirnaty®), Moderna (Spikevax TM)
12 to 17 years (no risk factors for severe COVID-19)	Pfizer (Comirnaty®) bivalent	Pfizer (Comirnaty®)
12 to 17 years (risk factors for severe COVID-19)*	Pfizer (Comirnaty®) bivalent	Moderna (Spikevax™) bivalent †
18 years and older	Moderna (Spikevax TM) bivalent or Pfizer (Comirnaty®) bivalent	Pfizer (Comirnaty®) Moderna (Spikevax™) Novavax (Nuvaxovid®) vaccine

^{*}Risk factors include having a serious health condition, a developmental disability, or having a weakened immune system. [†]Off-label use only. Not approved by Health Canada but recommended as an alternative by NACI.²

- Do the bivalent boosters offer better protection than the original COVID-19 vaccines? We do not know yet if a bivalent vaccine will give you better protection compared to the original vaccine. Bivalent vaccines help your body make more antibodies against the Omicron variants.4
- Why do I need multiple COVID-19 vaccine doses?

The virus that causes COVID-19 continues to evolve. The original mRNA vaccines provide strong protection against severe illness, but the protection starts to fade after about 6 months. It fades more quickly in older adults. Routine vaccine doses are most important for people at higher risk of severe illness, including older adults and those with a weakened immune system. New vaccines that could provide longer lasting protection, such as nasal vaccines, are being studied.

Staying <u>UP-TO-DATE</u> with COVID-19 vaccination ¬



Adults 18 years and older:



All adults aged 18 and older may be offered a Fall 2022/Winter 2023 booster no matter how many booster doses they have already had. It is especially important for people at higher risk of serious illness to get all recommended vaccine doses. This includes people who are 65 years and older, pregnant, have a serious health condition, or have a weakened immune system.

People 12 to 17 years old:



People aged 12 to 17 years may be offered a Fall 2022/Winter 2023 booster, even if they already had 1 booster. People aged 12 to 17 years who do not have other risks for serious illness or who have had a recent COVID-19 infection can speak with their healthcare team for advice.

Children 5 to 11 years old:



Children who have already had 1 booster dose are up-to-date. Children who have not yet had a booster dose can get the Pfizer bivalent vaccine as a booster dose.



How soon after the last COVID-19 vaccine or COVID-19 infection should a Fall 2022/ Winter 2023 booster dose be given?

NACI recommends getting a Fall/Winter booster dose 6 months (168 days or 24 weeks) after the last COVID-19 vaccine dose (or last confirmed COVID-19 infection).² A booster can be safely given as soon as a person has recovered from a COVID-19 infection, but waiting may give better protection.

Should people who have had COVID-19 get booster doses?

Yes. NACI recommends waiting 6 months after a COVID-19 infection to get a vaccine. The immune system's response to infection is not predictable. Getting all recommended COVID-19 vaccines will give you the strongest possible protection. In younger people who have had at least 1 booster and a recent COVID-19 infection (within 6 months), we don't know yet how much extra protection another booster dose will give. If you are unsure about getting a booster dose, speak with your healthcare team.

• What are the side effects for bivalent vaccines?

In studies, the bivalent vaccines had similar side effects to the original mRNA vaccines. Many people notice mild side effects like arm pain and fever that get better in a few days.

Inflammation of the heart (myocarditis) and of the sac around the heart (pericarditis) has happened rarely after mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.² The risk of myocarditis after an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine is much lower than the risk of myocarditis due to COVID-19 infection.⁵ The risk of myocarditis may be lower with booster doses than with the initial doses.

- Do I need to get the same COVID-19 vaccine brand for every dose?
 - No. The brand of your Fall 2022/Winter 2023 booster does not need to match the brand of your initial doses. mRNA vaccines (e.g., Pfizer Comirnaty®, Moderna Spikevax™) and the Novavax (Nuvaxovid®) protein subunit vaccine can be used as boosters.
- If someone had a cold recently and doesn't know if it was COVID-19 or not, should they get a booster dose?

Yes. If you have not had a confirmed COVID-19 infection, schedule your booster dose using the date of your last COVID-19 vaccine dose. There are no safety concerns if you get a COVID-19 vaccine shortly after having a COVID-19 infection.



Staying up to date by getting all recommended vaccine doses

Best protection from getting severely ill or dying from COVID-19



⁵ CDC. (2021). Association Between COVID-19 and Myocarditis Using Hospital-Based Administrative Data.





¹ Our World In Data. (2022). Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations.

² NACI. (2022). COVID-19 vaccine - Canadian Immunization Guide.

³ NACI. (2022). COVID-19 vaccine - Canadian Immunization Guide (Risk factors).

⁴ NEJM. (2022). A Bivalent Omicron-Containing Booster Vaccine against Covid-19.