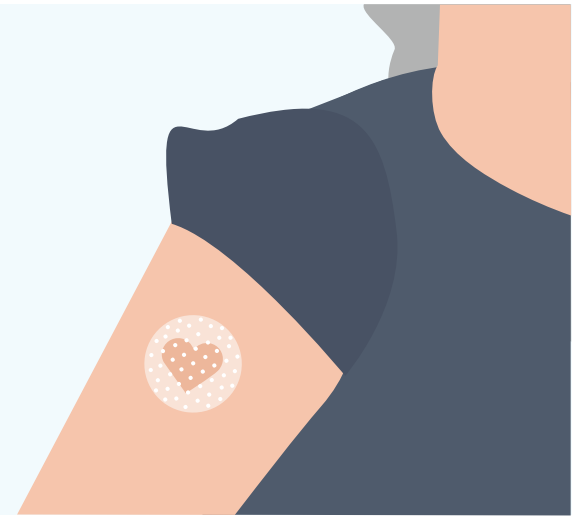


Pfizer and Moderna Vaccines

Information about COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Doses



Cases of COVID-19 are increasing globally and in Canada. Studies suggest that a booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine produces a very good immune response that is generally higher than the immune response after your initial COVID-19 vaccine series. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has reviewed the latest data that suggest protection against infection decreases over time after completion of a primary COVID-19 vaccine series. As such, NACI has made COVID-19 vaccine booster dose recommendations.

NACI strongly recommends all individuals in the authorized age groups without contraindications receive a two dose primary series of an mRNA vaccine (*Pfizer or Moderna*).

While breakthrough cases of COVID-19 will occasionally occur in vaccinated populations, evidence shows that the vaccine protects against severe disease and death.

No data currently exists on the long-term effectiveness of booster doses so it remains unknown at this time how long the benefit might last.

Who is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination booster dose?

In alignment with NACI recommendations, Nova Scotia is offering mRNA COVID-19 booster **doses at least 168 days** following completion of the primary series for the following groups:

- Residents of long-term care facilities or other congregate living settings for seniors
- Designated caregivers of long-term care residents
- Adults within specified age groups. novascotia.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/#booster-doses
- Frontline healthcare workers.
- Individuals who received two doses of AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine or one dose of the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.

Booster doses are also available to those 18 years and older in First Nations and African Nova Scotian communities.

Booster doses for immunocompromised will be available at least 168 days following the third dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

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Myocarditis and Pericarditis

There have been no notable differences in side effects following a booster dose compared to that of the second dose of a primary series in study participants. Rare cases of myocarditis and pericarditis following vaccination with COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have been reported more commonly in males, persons under 30 and following the second dose.

National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) advises:

- For people aged 18 to 29 years who are eligible to receive a booster dose of vaccine, the use of Pfizer may be preferred to Moderna.
- As a precautionary measure, NACI recommends that people who have experienced myocarditis with or without pericarditis within 6 weeks of receiving a previous dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should wait to receive further doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.
- People with a history compatible with pericarditis and who either had no cardiac workup or had normal cardiac investigations can receive subsequent doses of mRNA vaccine once they are symptom free and at least 90 days has passed since vaccination.

Some people with confirmed myocarditis with or without pericarditis may choose to receive another dose of vaccine after discussing the risks and benefits with their healthcare provider. For these individuals, when choosing another dose of vaccine, it should be the Pfizer-BioNTech 30 mcg vaccine due to the lower reported rate of myocarditis with or without pericarditis following the Pfizer-BioNTech 30 mcg vaccine compared to the Moderna 100 mcg vaccine.

People who have a history of myocarditis not related to mRNA COVID-19 vaccination and are still being followed by a health care provider should consult a health care provider for individual considerations and recommendations. People who are no longer being followed clinically for cardiac issues following myocarditis should receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

You should read [Important Information about Myocarditis and Pericarditis for Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines](#).

Reasons for Booster Doses

- Protection against severe illness remains generally high but may decrease over time
- Booster doses of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines such as Pfizer or Moderna can increase the immune response and are expected to offer better protection against infection and severe disease. Booster doses may help reduce spread of infection and have a favourable safety profile similar to the first two doses.
- Health care workers are at increased risk of waning protection and could pose a risk to vulnerable populations.
- People who received a vaccine series with AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine or one dose of Janssen vaccine have a somewhat lower initial vaccine effectiveness and may become susceptible to the virus sooner compared to those who received at least one dose of an mRNA vaccine (*Pfizer or Moderna*).

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For information, visit novascotia.ca/vaccine-plan

