COVID-19 Vaccine Booster

Public Health is recommending that all eligible Nova Scotians get a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to help to ensure more people across the province are better protected against the virus.

Why should I get a COVID-19 booster?

- With two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death remains generally high but this may decrease overtime.
- Booster doses of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines such as Pfizer or Moderna can increase the immune response and offer **better protection** against infection and severe disease.
- Compared to unvaccinated people, Nova Scotians who have received a booster dose have a:
  - 80% reduced risk of hospitalization
  - 90% reduced risk of death from COVID-19

  Source: Table 3 - novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19-epidemiologic-summary_2022-04-12.pdf

Dose 1	Dose 2		Booster
Immunity builds	Fully immunized	After time immunity may decrease	Immunity goes back up

What is an mRNA vaccine?

mRNA is a type of vaccine that teaches our cells how to make the protein our bodies need so that our immune system can protect against infection. Pfizer and Moderna are both mRNA vaccines.

What does immunity mean?

Immunity is our body's defense against sickness and infections. When the body senses germs or foreign substances (called antigens), the immune system works to recognize the germs and get rid of them.

A vaccine (also called immunization) introduces the body to a germ in a way that doesn't make someone sick. Instead, it lets the body make antibodies that will protect the person from future attack by the germ.

Who can get a booster?

- ✓ **Anyone 12 years of age** and older after they have been vaccinated with 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine (also known as a primary series).
- ✓ If **immunocompromised**, you may need three doses to complete your primary series before getting a booster.

When can I get the booster?

- **168 days** (24 weeks) after your second dose for most Nova Scotians
- **140 days** (20 weeks) after your second dose if you are pregnant
- **120 days** (17 weeks) after your second dose for eligible groups.

Second boosters are available 120 days after the first booster for eligible groups. See **nshealth.ca/coronavirusvaccine** for details on eligibility.

I've had COVID, can I still get the booster?

Yes, you can! Vaccination is very important, even if you've been previously infected with COVID-19. While infection alone provides some protection, vaccination after infection helps improve the immune response and may provide better and longer-lasting protection.

- If you had COVID-19 and have **not been fully vaccinated** (only one dose or no dose), you should wait at least two months (60 days) to get a first or second dose of vaccine.
- If you had COVID-19 and have been **fully vaccinated**, you should wait at least three months (90 days) to get a booster dose.

Does it matter what type of vaccine I get for my booster?

Mixing doses of mRNA vaccines is completely safe. You may be offered a different mRNA vaccine for your booster dose than the vaccine you received for your primary series. **Both mRNA vaccines are safe and effective to use as a booster dose.**

Is a third dose and a booster the same thing?

No, boosters and third doses have different purposes:

- A **booster dose** helps maintain and lengthen your level of protection, as immunity may decrease over time.
- A **third dose** completes the primary series for people with compromised immune systems who don't develop a strong enough immune response with two doses. They will then be eligible for a booster dose after completing their primary series of three doses.

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How to get your booster:

Visit a Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia walk-in vaccine clinic: **pans.ns.ca/walk-covid-19-vaccine-clinics**

Book your booster online: **novascotia.ca/coronavirus/book-your-vaccination-appointment**

Or call **1-833-797-7772**.

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