Updated: Eligibility for Third Doses of COVID-19 Vaccines

TO:
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Pharmacists
Infectious Disease Physicians
St. Joseph’s Centre for Ambulatory Health Services, Urgent Care
Emergency Departments

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:
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DATE: November 12, 2021

This is an updated advisory from yesterday that provides further guidance on Third Dose product dosage. Please see page three for the update.

This advisory provides an update on third dose eligibility for COVID-19 vaccines. The populations outlined in this medical advisory have either demonstrated a sub-optimal immune response to a complete two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series and/or evidence demonstrates waning immunity over time. Specific populations also possess additional risk factors that warrant attempts to offer additional protection (i.e., higher risk of severe outcomes due to age, higher risk of exposure due to profession). The following populations are currently being offered third doses in the province of Ontario:

- **Individuals who are Moderately-to-Severely Immunocompromised**, including:
  - Individuals receiving active treatment (including those who have completed treatment within the last three months) for solid tumour or hematologic malignancies (e.g.: chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy)
  - Recipients of solid-organ transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy
  - Recipients of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-T-cell therapy or hematopoietic stem cell transplant (within 2 years of transplantation or taking immunosuppression therapy)
  - Individuals with moderate to severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g.: DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
  - Individuals with stage 3 or advanced untreated HIV infection and those with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
o Individuals receiving active treatment with the following categories of immunosuppressive therapies: anti-B cell therapies (monoclonal antibodies targeting CD19, CD20 and CD22), high-dose systemic corticosteroids (refer to the CIG for suggested definition of high dose steroids), alkylating agents, antimetabolites, or tumor-necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors and other biologic agents that are significantly immunosuppressive. For a list of eligible immunosuppressive medications, please see the resource section below

- **Older Adults in Congregate Settings, including:**
  o Residents of Long-Term Care Homes (LTCH), Retirement Homes (RH), Elder Care Lodges, and older adults living in other congregate settings (e.g. assisted-living facilities, chronic care hospitals, naturally occurring congregate retirement settings/congregate senior’s apartment buildings, older adults living in congregate settings for people with developmental disabilities, mental health and addictions issues, etc.)

- **All Ontarians 70 years of Age and Older**
  o Please note: 70 years of age and older is defined by year of birth, therefore anyone born in 1951 or before is eligible

- **Health Care Workers, including Essential Caregivers:**
  o Any regulated health professionals and any staff member, contract worker, student/trainee, registered volunteer, or other designated essential caregiver currently working in-person in a health care organization, including workers that are not providing direct patient care and are frequently in the patient environment (i.e. cleaning staff, research staff, other administrative staff)
  o Workers providing healthcare service or direct patient service in a congregate, residential or community setting outside of a health care organization
  o Please note that third doses are only eligible for health care workers and essential caregiver **16 years of age or older**
  o For more information on eligible health care workers, please see Appendix B of COVID-19 Vaccine Third Dose Recommendations linked below

- **First Nations, Inuit and Métis Adults, including non-Indigenous household members**
  o Please note that third doses are only eligible for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Adults, including non-Indigenous household members **16 years of age or older**

- **Recipients of a Viral Vector Vaccine or Series**
  o Please note: this includes individuals who received **two** doses of AstraZeneca or **one** dose of Johnson&Johnson. This does not include individuals who received a series one dose of AstraZeneca and one dose of an mRNA vaccine

The populations outlined in the medical advisory are eligible to receive their third doses at the following intervals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>58 Days Post-2nd Dose</th>
<th>168 Days Post-2nd Dose</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals who are Moderately-to-Severely Immunocompromised</td>
<td>Older Adults in Congregate Settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ontarians 70 years of Age and Older</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Care Workers</td>
<td>Essential Caregivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Nations, Inuit and Métis Adults, including Non-Indigenous Household Members</td>
<td>Recipients of a Viral Vector Vaccine or Series</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The populations outlined in the medical advisory can book appointments and access vaccines through the following channels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How to Access Vaccine</th>
<th>Populations</th>
<th>Required Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Check with your local pharmacy</td>
<td>Individuals who are Moderately- to Severely Immunocompromised</td>
<td>Valid prescription or referral form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Book an appointment online at pop-up or mass clinics</td>
<td>All Ontarians 70 years of Age and Older</td>
<td>Self-Attestation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Call the Vaccine Hotline at (905) 974-9848, option 7</td>
<td>Health Care Workers</td>
<td>Self-Attestation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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</table>

For more information on booking appointments and channels available, please visit the City of Hamilton’s COVID-19 Vaccines webpage (https://www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines)

*NEW* - 3rd/Booster Dose Product and Dosing Recommendations

Within the recommendations, there is also a change in the recommended dosing for mRNA vaccine. Either Moderna or Pfizer vaccines may be used as a 3rd/booster dose (regardless of which COVID-19 vaccine was used in the primary series)

**Moderna Dosing**
- Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes or seniors in other congregate living settings, adults 70 years of age and older, and all eligible immunocompromised individuals are recommended to receive the **full dose (100 mcg)** if being offered Moderna for a 3rd or booster dose
- For all other individuals less than 70 years of age, if offering Moderna as a booster dose, a **half dose (50 mcg)** is recommended

**Pfizer-BioNTech dosing**
- If offering Pfizer-BioNTech for a 3rd/booster dose, the full dose (30 mcg) is recommended

**AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD COVID-19**
- Individuals that received AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccine for their 1st and 2nd dose are recommended to receive an mRNA vaccine for their 3rd/booster dose unless contraindicated.
- A booster dose of a viral vector vaccine should only be considered when an mRNA vaccine is contraindicated or inaccessible. People who experienced a severe immediate allergic reaction after a 1st dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine can safely receive future doses of the same or another mRNA COVID-19 vaccine after consulting with an allergist/immunologist or another appropriate physician.

For more information, see the National Advisory Committee on Immunization’s (NACI) recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines linked below.
Resources

1. COVID-19 Vaccine Third Dose Recommendations -