

***Updated:* Executive Officer Notice: Administration of Publicly Funded COVID-19 Vaccines in Ontario Pharmacies – Eligibility**

Effective March 6th, 2023

Certain eligible pharmacies can administer publicly funded injectable COVID-19 vaccines to eligible individuals (see Pharmacy Eligibility below).

The purpose of this Executive Officer (EO) Notice (Administration of the Publicly Funded COVID-19 Vaccines in Ontario Pharmacies – **Eligibility**), the EO Notice: Administration of the Publicly Funded COVID-19 Vaccines in Ontario Pharmacies – **Billing**, and the accompanying Questions and Answers (Qs & As) documents, are to set out the terms and conditions for a participating pharmacy's submission of claims for payment (claims) for administering injectable COVID-19 vaccines to eligible individuals. Each document is a ministry policy that pharmacy operators must comply with under section 3.2 of the Health Network System (HNS) Subscription Agreement for Pharmacy Operators. Participating pharmacies must comply with all of the terms and conditions set out in the EO Notices and Qs & As. It is a condition of participating that participating pharmacies offer first, second and third or booster doses to all eligible groups, provided that there is sufficient supply of the vaccines.

The two (2) EO Notices and the accompanying Qs & As documents are not intended to describe a pharmacy operator's obligations in respect of administering injectable COVID-19 vaccines under applicable legislation, other agreements with the Province of Ontario, or policies of the Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP). Pharmacy operators with questions about their legal obligations outside of the HNS Subscription Agreement should refer to the applicable legislation, other agreement, or OCP policy as appropriate.

This EO Notice (Administration of the Publicly Funded COVID-19 Vaccines in Ontario Pharmacies – **Eligibility**) replaces the previous EO notice on the same topic respecting the administration of publicly funded COVID-19 vaccines in Ontario pharmacies that was effective December 21st, 2022.

Pharmacy Eligibility

In order to be eligible to submit claims for administering a publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine, a pharmacy operator (also referred to in this document as a “participating pharmacy”) must be selected to participate by the ministry and meet the following requirements:

- Have a valid HNS Subscription Agreement with the ministry
- Have a valid agreement¹ with the ministry respecting COVID-19 vaccine administration and the use of the Provincial COVID-19 vaccine solution (the “COVID-19 Vaccine Agreement”); and
- Enrolled in the current Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP)².

This eligibility criteria may be updated from time to time. Please refer to the [ministry website](#) for the most recent version of this notice.

Individual Eligibility

The following rules apply to the interpretation of the eligibility criteria in the summary table below for any COVID-19 vaccine doses.

An individual is eligible to receive a publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine if they live, work, or study in Ontario or they are visiting Ontario from another province / territory or another country, and if they meet the applicable eligibility criteria in the table below. For all vaccine doses, when eligibility is defined by age, individuals must be the respective age of eligibility on the day of the vaccine administration.

Residents of long-term care homes, residents of retirement homes, and persons living in other congregate settings (e.g. assisted-living facilities, naturally occurring congregate retirement settings/seniors apartment buildings, congregate settings for people with developmental disabilities, mental health and addictions issues, etc.) who meet the eligibility criteria in the table below are only eligible to receive a pharmacy-administered vaccine dose when pharmacy staff administer the dose at the long-term care home,

¹ A valid agreement is in respect of a particular pharmacy operator operating at a specific pharmacy location. Where a pharmacy is sold, or where a pharmacy operator relocates, a new COVID-19 Vaccine Agreement is required to reflect the new pharmacy operator or location.

² Enrollment in the UIIP is in respect of a particular pharmacy operator operating at a specific pharmacy location. Where a pharmacy is sold, or where a pharmacy operator relocates, new enrollment in the UIIP is required to reflect the new pharmacy operator or location. Refer to the Questions and Answers for Pharmacies document (question 21) for more information.

retirement home or other congregate setting. Staff, support workers, essential caregivers, volunteers and contractors who are working at the long-term care home, retirement home or other congregate settings are also eligible for pharmacy-administered vaccine doses either at the pharmacy or when the pharmacy staff visit the home / congregate setting, provided that they meet the applicable eligibility criteria in the table below. Pharmacies must coordinate any vaccine administration at a long-term care home, retirement home or congregate setting with the local public health unit and the proprietor of the home/setting.

Informed consent is required to administer any COVID-19 vaccine to an eligible individual.

For a primary series NACI preferentially recommends receipt of monovalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (i.e., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) to complete the primary series for all individuals 6 months and older, without contraindications to the vaccine.

Individuals are recommended to receive the same mRNA vaccine product for all doses in a primary series, using the dose that is correct for the age at the time of appointment.

The recommended interval between doses in the primary series is 2 months (56 days).

Individuals who have received COVID-19 vaccines outside of Ontario or Canada should contact their local public health unit to have their COVID-19 immunization record documented in COVAX_{ON}. Pharmacies should refer to the most recent [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#) for information on completing the primary series with different vaccine combinations.

Primary Series Recommendations for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised Individuals

An extended primary series constitutes administration of an additional dose to complete the primary series and is recommended for certain moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals. See the COVID-19 chapter in the [Canadian Immunization Guide: Immunocompromised persons](#) for more information.

An extended primary series of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines is recommended for the following immunocompromised populations eligible for vaccination with the vaccine product authorized for their age group:

- Individuals receiving dialysis (hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis)

- Individuals receiving active³ treatment (e.g., chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy) for solid tumour or hematologic malignancies
- 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).
- HIV with AIDS-defining illness in last 12 months before starting vaccine series, or severe immune compromise with CD4 count <200 cells/uL or CD4 percentage <15%, or without HIV viral suppression
- Individuals receiving active treatment with the following categories of immunosuppressive therapies: anti-B cell therapies⁴ (monoclonal antibodies targeting CD19, CD20 and CD22), high-dose systemic corticosteroids (refer to the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#) for suggested definition of high dose steroids), alkylating agents, antimetabolites, or tumor-necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors and other biologic agents that are significantly immunosuppressive.

It is recommended that a re-vaccination with a repeat COVID-19 vaccine primary series plus booster (if applicable) be initiated post-transplantation for hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT), hematopoietic cell transplants (HCT) (autologous or allogeneic), and recipients of CAR-T-cell therapy given the loss of immunity following therapy or transplant.⁵

Staying Up to Date⁶:

- For those 6 months to 4 years, means having a completed primary series.
- For those 5 years and older, means completion of the primary series, receipt of a booster dose (monovalent or bivalent) and that the last COVID-19 vaccine received was within the last 6 months.

³ Active treatment includes patients who have completed treatment within 3 months. Active treatment is defined as chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy, and excludes individuals receiving therapy that does not suppress the immune system (e.g., solely hormonal therapy or radiation therapy). See Ontario Health/Cancer Care Ontario's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

⁴ Active treatment for patients receiving B-cell depleting therapy includes patients who have completed treatment within 12 months

⁵ As per the [Canadian Immunization Guideline](#), HSCT recipients should be viewed as vaccine naïve (i.e. never immunized) and require re-immunization after transplant.

⁶ This definition is based on [NACI recommendations for COVID-19 vaccine booster doses](#), however, is subject to change as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.

Individuals are recommended to receive a mRNA vaccine for their booster dose(s). Bivalent boosters in authorized age groups are recommended over monovalent boosters. For individuals in authorized age groups who are not able or willing to receive a bivalent Omicron-containing mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, an original monovalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may be offered.

Booster Dose Recommendations for High-Risk Groups

In accordance with [NACI](#), the following high-risk groups are strongly recommended to receive a booster dose this 2022-2023 respiratory season⁷:

- Individuals aged 65 years and older
- Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges, and individuals living in other congregate setting that are 12 years of age or older
- Individuals 12 years and older with moderately to severely immunocompromising conditions
- Individuals 12 years of age and older with an underlying medical condition that places them at high risk of severe COVID-19
- Health care workers⁸
- Pregnant individuals
- Individuals who identify as First Nations, Inuit or Métis and their adult non-Indigenous household members
- Individuals in racialized communities and/or marginalized communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19

Individuals 5 to 11 years of age with an underlying medical condition that places them at high risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 (including those who are moderately to severely immunocompromised and who have received an extended primary series) are strongly recommended to receive a booster dose.

For booster doses the optimal interval after a previous COVID-19 vaccination or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection is 6 months. A shortened interval of at least 3 months may be considered in the context of heightened epidemiologic risk and for those at high risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes.

For more clinical information on primary and booster doses, dosing intervals, product preferences, special populations, COVID-19 vaccines interchangeability, and adverse reactions refer to the ministry's most recent [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#).

⁷ In Ontario, the start of the respiratory season is defined as on or after September 1, 2022.

⁸ Health care workers are not at a higher risk of severe outcomes, unless they belong to another high-risk group. However, patient-facing health care workers who care for high-risk patients are recommended to be vaccinated to protect their vulnerable patients and all health care workers are recommended to be vaccinated to ensure health system capacity.

Summary Table⁹ - COVID-19 Vaccines Individual Eligibility Criteria

	Age	Vaccine Product	Vaccine Dosing ¹⁰
PRIMARY SERIES (and re-vaccination ¹¹)	6 months to 4 years	** Moderna preferred for immunocompromised¹² ** Moderna Spikevax 0.10mg/mL blue cap / purple label (DIN 02527685) Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty 3 mcg/0.2mL maroon cap / maroon label (DIN 02530325)	Immunocompetent Moderna - 2 doses, 56 days apart Pfizer - 3 doses, 56 days apart
			Immunocompromised Moderna - 3 doses, 56 days apart Pfizer - 4 doses, 56 days apart
	5 years	** Pfizer preferred ** Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty 10mcg/0.2mL orange cap / orange label (DIN 02522454) Moderna Spikevax 0.10mg/mL blue cap / purple label (DIN 02527685)	Immunocompetent 2 doses, 56 days apart
			Immunocompromised 3 doses, 56 days apart

⁹ For more information on COVID-19 vaccines refer to the ministry's most recent [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#). For age restrictions on COVID-19 vaccines based on the applicable product monographs see the most recent [Executive Officer Notice: Administration of Publicly Funded COVID-19 Vaccines in Ontario Pharmacies – Billing](#).

¹⁰ For more information on recommended and minimum intervals between doses refer to the ministry's most recent [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#).

¹¹ Re-vaccination with a new COVID-19 vaccine primary series is recommended following hematopoietic stem cell transplant (HSCT), hematopoietic cell transplant (HCT) (autologous or allogeneic), and recipients of CAR-T-cell therapy given the loss of immunity following therapy or transplant.

¹² Preference is due to feasibility of series completion rather than any safety signals observed. A 4-dose primary series with Pfizer-BioNTech (3 mcg) may have feasibility challenges, including the need to schedule 4 separate appointments and space appointments appropriately relative to other childhood vaccination appointments.

	Age	Vaccine Product	Vaccine Dosing ¹⁰
	6 to 11 years	** Pfizer preferred ** Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty 10mcg/0.2mL orange cap / orange label (DIN 02522454)	Immunocompetent 2 doses, 56 days apart
		Moderna Spikevax 0.20mg/mL red cap / red label (DIN 02510014)	Immunocompromised 3 doses, 56 days apart
	12 years and older	Moderna Spikevax 0.10mg/mL blue cap / purple label (DIN 02527685)	
		** Pfizer preferred for 12 to 29 years ** Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty 30mcg/0.3mL grey cap / grey label (DIN 02527863)	Immunocompetent 2 doses, 56 days apart
		Moderna Spikevax 0.20mg/mL red cap / red label (DIN 02510014)	Immunocompromised 3 doses, 56 days apart
		Nuvaxovid COVID-19 Vaccine (DIN 02525364) ¹³	2 doses, 56 days apart For those not able or willing to receive a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine.
	18 years and older	Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine (DIN 02513153) ¹³	1 dose When all other authorized COVID-19 vaccines are contraindicated.

¹³ There is limited supply of Nuvaxovid and Janssen vaccines. Contact your local public health unit to determine how eligible individuals may receive these vaccines.

	Age	Vaccine Product	Vaccine Dosing ¹⁰
BOOSTER DOSES ¹⁴	6 months to 4 years	Not eligible for booster doses	
	5 years	Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty Bivalent 10mcg/0.2mL orange cap / orange label (DIN 02533197)	Immunocompetent 1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days))
		Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty 10mcg/0.2mL (monovalent) orange cap / orange label (DIN 02522454)	Immunocompromised 1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days))
	6 to 11 years	** Pfizer bivalent preferred ** Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty Bivalent 10mcg/0.2mL orange cap / orange label (DIN 02533197) Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty 10mcg/0.2mL (monovalent) orange cap / orange label (DIN 02522454) Moderna Spikevax Bivalent (BA.1) 0.10mg/mL blue cap / green label (DIN 02530252)	Immunocompetent 1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days)) Immunocompromised 1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days))

¹⁴ While bivalent booster doses are preferred, an individual may receive a monovalent booster with informed consent.

Age	Vaccine Product	Vaccine Dosing ¹⁰
12 to 17 years	<p>** Pfizer bivalent preferred **</p> <p>Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty Bivalent 30mcg/0.3mL grey cap / grey label (DIN 02531461)</p> <p>Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty 30mcg/0.3mL (monovalent) grey cap / grey label (DIN 02527863)</p> <p>Moderna Spikevax Bivalent (BA.1) 0.10mg/mL blue cap / green label (DIN 02530252)</p> <p>Moderna Spikevax 0.20mg/mL (monovalent) red cap / red label (DIN 02510014)</p> <p>Moderna Spikevax 0.10mg/mL (monovalent) blue cap / purple label (DIN 02527685)</p>	<p>Immunocompetent</p> <p>1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days))</p>
		<p>Immunocompromised</p> <p>1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days))</p>
18 years and older	<p>** Bivalent preferred **</p> <p>Moderna Spikevax Bivalent (BA.4/5) 0.10mg/mL blue cap / grey label (DIN 02532352)</p> <p>Moderna Spikevax Bivalent (BA.1) 0.10mg/mL blue cap / green label (DIN 02530252)</p>	<p>Immunocompetent</p> <p>1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days))</p>

	Age	Vaccine Product	Vaccine Dosing ¹⁰
		<p>Moderna Spikevax 0.20mg/mL (monovalent) red cap / red label (DIN 02510014)</p> <p>Moderna Spikevax 0.10mg/mL (monovalent) blue cap / purple label (DIN 02527685)</p> <p>Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty Bivalent 30mcg/0.3mL grey cap / grey label (DIN 02531461)</p> <p>Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty 30mcg/0.3mL (monovalent) grey cap / grey label (DIN 02527863)</p>	<p>Immunocompromised</p> <p>1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days))</p>
		<p>Nuvaxovid COVID-19 Vaccine (DIN 02525364)¹⁵</p>	<p>1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days))</p> <p>For those not able or willing to receive a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine.</p>
		<p>Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine (DIN 02513153)¹⁵</p>	<p>1 dose, if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose (minimum interval is 3 months (84 days))</p> <p>When all other authorized COVID-19 vaccines are contraindicated.</p>

¹⁵ There is limited supply of Nuvaxovid and Janssen vaccines. Contact your local public health unit to determine how eligible individuals may receive these vaccines.

Pharmacies should be informed and stay current with the vaccine's official indications in accordance with Health Canada's approved product monograph, including information regarding recommended dosing as per the product monograph. Ontario is funding vaccine doses, based on recommendations of NACI, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts as noted in the [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#) and guidance from [NACI](#) and the OIAC.

This eligibility criteria may be updated from time to time. Please refer to the [ministry website](#) for the most recent version of this notice and for details of the provincial rollout plan, please visit the [ministry's website](#).

Prior EO Notices

Updates relating to this Executive Officer Notice have been communicated previously as per the effective dates listed below.

EO Notices in 2022				
January 13	April 7	July 28	September 12	November 8
February 18	May 2	August 8	September 26	December 21
March 25	July 14	September 1	October 17	
EO Notices in 2021				
March 10	May 11	June 4	September 1	December 2
March 22	May 13	June 14	September 8	December 17
April 1	May 18	June 17	October 1	December 20
April 19	May 21	June 25	October 8	
April 30	May 23	July 5	November 3	
May 6	May 31	August 18	November 25	

Additional Information:

For pharmacy billing:

Please call ODB Pharmacy Help Desk at: 1-800-668-6641

For COVID-19 vaccine rollout in pharmacy:

Please email the ministry at: OPDPInfoBox@ontario.ca

For Ministry COVID-19 Vaccine-Relevant Information and Planning Resources

Please access this [website](#)

For all other Health Care Providers and the Public:

Please call ServiceOntario, Infoline at 1-866-532-3161 TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282.