

June 19, 2023

Re: COVID-19 Bivalent Vaccines Recommended for Primary Series Use

Dear Health Care Provider:

Many monovalent vaccines will no longer be available in Manitoba and Canada in the coming months. Currently, the bivalent vaccines are only authorized for use as booster doses by Health Canada for individuals aged five years and older. Health Canada is currently reviewing manufacturer submissions for the use of bivalent vaccines for the primary series and a decision is expected in the coming months.

Given this context, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) released interim guidance on June 9, 2023, recommending the off-label use of bivalent Omicron-containing vaccines in individuals six months of age and over when mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are used for the primary series.

Table 1. Interim recommended bivalent Omicron-containing mRNA vaccines, dosages and schedules for primary series^a

Population	Vaccine type and dosage	Number of doses and optimal interval for individuals who are not moderately to severely immunocompromised	Number of doses and recommended intervals for individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised
Children 6 months to 4 years of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderna Spikevax bivalent 25 mcg (0.25 mL)^b 	2 doses at least 8 weeks apart	3 doses 4 to 8 weeks apart
Children 5 to 11 years of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty bivalent 10 mcg (0.2 mL) Moderna Spikevax bivalent 25 mcg (0.25 mL)^c 	2 doses at least 8 weeks apart	3 doses 4 to 8 weeks apart
Individuals 12 years of age and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty bivalent 30 mcg (0.3 mL) (Preferred for those 12 to 29 years of age^c) Moderna Spikevax bivalent 50 mcg (0.5 mL)^c 	2 doses 8 weeks apart	3 doses 4 to 8 weeks apart

- Products referred to include Moderna Spikevax bivalent BA.1 or BA.4/5, and Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty bivalent BA.4/5.
- There is no bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech product available in Canada to provide an appropriate dosage (3 mcg) for children 6 months to 4 years of age.
- Individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised may benefit more from a primary series with Moderna Spikevax bivalent (50 mcg in ≥12 years of age and 25 mcg in 6 months to 11 years of age) compared to Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty bivalent BA.4/5 (30 mcg in ≥12 years of age and 10 mcg in 5 to 11 years of age).

Note:

- Health care providers in Manitoba can still use the monovalent Moderna/Spikevax™ (25mcg) and Pfizer/Comirnaty™ (3mcg) vaccines for infants 6 months to 4 years old while supply is available. Monovalent and bivalent mRNA vaccines both provide protection against severe disease and either would be appropriate for the primary series.
- 6 months is the recommended interval between the primary series and booster dose.

NACI's full recommendation on the use of bivalent Omicron-containing COVID-19 vaccines for primary series are available at: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-interim-guidance-use-bivalent-omicron-containing-covid-19-vaccines-primary-series/statement.pdf>

Provincial resources are being updated to reflect these new recommendations and will be available shortly. Resources for Health Care Providers can be found at: manitoba.ca/covid19/health-care-providers.html

Updated provincial factsheets will be available in the coming days at:
<https://www.manitoba.ca/covid19/public-resources.html>

Reporting doses administered: All immunizations administered are to be recorded and reported with the correct product and strength to ensure accurate electronic immunization records. Please note that an updated tariff code for the Moderna/Spikevax™ bivalent BA.4/5 half dose (25mcg) will be sent out once available.

Please share this information with all relevant colleagues in your facility/clinic.

Sincerely,

"Original Signed By"

Richard Baydack, PhD
A/Co – Executive Director
Population and Public Health
Communicable Disease Control

"Original Signed By"

Natalie Casaclang, MD, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health,
Population and Public Health
Communicable Disease Control