



Health

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July 21, 2022

Dear Health Care Provider:

Planning for a fall COVID-19 immunization campaign continues. In the meantime, health care providers and immunizers are encouraged to continue to counsel patients on the individual risks and benefits of COVID-19 vaccine booster doses, taking into account:

- **What is known at this time.** BA.4 and BA.5 are starting to circulate in Canada. It is unclear how effective a booster with the current vaccines will work against them. A bivalent vaccine that is likely more effective against Omicron subvariants is currently being reviewed by Health Canada and could be authorized for use before fall.
- **Timing of a fall COVID-19 vaccine booster dose.** The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) (<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/naci-guidance-planning-fall-2022-covid-19-vaccine-booster.pdf>) recommends an interval of 3-6 months from the last dose of COVID-19 vaccine, based on several factors, including maximizing vaccine effectiveness and minimizing health risks. A bivalent vaccine would be offered for the fall if one is authorized and available for use. Receiving a booster dose now could delay being eligible to receive a bivalent vaccine because of NACI's recommended minimum interval of 3-6 months between doses.

As is often the case, your recommendation for a COVID-19 booster will depend on the individual circumstances of the patient you are counselling.

The provincial factsheet titled, COVID-19 Vaccine: Booster Doses – Information for Adolescents and Adults (https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/covidvaccine/vaccine-booster-factsheet.pdf) includes additional information for clients on assessing the risks and benefits of a booster dose.

Sincerely,

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