

October 13, 2022

Bivalent COVID-19 Vaccine: Pfizer Bivalent Vaccine Approval, Eligibility and Guidance

Dear Health Care Provider:

Effective October 7, 2022, Health Canada authorized the use of the Pfizer BA.4/5 bivalent COVID-19 vaccine as a booster dose for those 12 years of age and older. Recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) on the use of the bivalent vaccine are available at: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-covid-19-vaccine-booster-doses.pdf>

Eligibility:

- The Pfizer BA.4/5 bivalent vaccine is the only bivalent vaccine approved for people 12-17 years of age
- Individuals 18 years of age and older are eligible for either the Moderna BA.1 bivalent vaccine or Pfizer BA.4/5 bivalent vaccine.

Please be reminded of the following:

At this point, the bivalent vaccines are only authorized as a booster dose. Individuals must complete their primary series of vaccine (usually two doses) before they can receive the bivalent vaccine.

Manitoba Health recommends that individuals 12 years of age and older receive an Omicron-containing fall booster dose. At this time, there is no clinical data comparing the immune response induced by the BA.1 bivalent vaccine to that induced by the BA.4/5 bivalent vaccine. Both Omicron-containing bivalent vaccines are expected to provide protection against severe outcomes from COVID-19.

The monovalent booster should be offered to individuals 12 years of age and older who choose not to receive the bivalent booster option. This is in line with NACI recommendations that everyone 12 years of age and older be offered a fall booster dose.

At this time, individuals who have already received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine as part of the fall COVID-19 vaccine booster program will not be eligible for an additional dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. This includes individuals who were vaccinated using any authorized original or bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. Both original and bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines will boost immune responses and are likely to provide significant protection against hospitalization and severe disease.

The Tariff code for Pfizer BA.4/5 Bivalent will be **8267** and is being finalized for physician billing. An updated Tariff Code Listing for vaccines can be located at:

Interval between Doses

It is recommended to wait six months from the last dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to receive a bivalent or monovalent booster dose. However, individuals who meet the eligibility criteria can receive a booster dose with a minimum of three months between doses.

Previous Infection

It is also recommended for individuals to wait 6 months since their last COVID-19 infection. At minimum, they need to be fully recovered before receiving a booster dose.

Co-administration with Other Vaccines

Individuals 5 years and older can receive non-COVID vaccines such as the flu vaccine together with their COVID vaccine.

As a precautionary measure, Moderna SPIKEVAX™ (25 mcg) COVID-19 vaccine for 6 months to 4 years should not routinely be given concurrently (i.e., same day) with other vaccines. A 14-day interval is recommended to ensure Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFIs) are attributed to the correct vaccine. Parents or guardians may still present to your facility for a COVID vaccine within 14 days of getting or have a scheduled appointment for a non-COVID vaccine. The precautionary recommendation to defer vaccination should be discussed with the parent/guardian in the informed consent process. A shortened interval or co-administration may be permitted if there are challenges of scheduling multiple visits and especially among those who are not likely to return for another visit to get either the COVID or other vaccines for their children.

Program Information

COVID-19 vaccine eligibility information is available at:

<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/vaccine/eligibility-criteria.html>

The Pfizer bivalent product monograph is available at:

https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covidvaccine/pfizer-cominarty-bivalent-ba4-5-pm.pdf

The Moderna bivalent product monograph is available at:

https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/covidvaccine/moderna-bivalent-pm.pdf.

A provincial factsheet is available at:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/vaccine/resources.html#factsheets>.

Recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) are available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci.html>

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

Sincerely,

“Original Signed By”

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