



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

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Date: November 12, 2021

Administrative Circular: 2021:44

ATTN: Medical Health Officers and Branch Offices
Public Health Nursing Administrators and Assistant Administrators
Holders of Communicable Disease Control Manuals

**Re: Update to Communicable Disease Control Manual, Chapter 2: Immunization,
Part 4 – Biological Products**

Part 4 – Biological Products

COVID-19 Vaccines

COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility

The COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page has been added to summarize the eligibility criteria for the COVID-19 primary vaccine series and booster dose, and includes a quick summary of the dosing recommendations for the respective COVID-19 vaccines. This page should be used in combination with the relevant Biological Product pages (see [Part 4 – Biological Products](#)).

Please add new page numbers: 1-2 dated November 12, 2021

COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine COMIRNATY™ (Pfizer-BioNTech)

- **Indications:**
 - A link to the new COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page has been added.
- **Doses and Schedule:**
 - The eligibility criteria for individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised have been removed as this content is now included in the COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page.
 - 'Booster dose' has been revised to 'Booster dose for eligible individuals 18 years of age and older' for clarity in this section.
 - The footnote regarding the minimum interval between completion of the primary series and the booster dose has been updated to include that during November and December 2021 invitations may be issued by the BC Get Vaccinated system at a 5 month interval to manage clinic capacity and such invitations for booster doses should be honoured at clinics.
- **Booster Doses:**
 - The eligibility criteria for booster doses have been removed as this content is now included in the new COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page.

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- The footnote indicating that the minimum age for booster dose is based on year of birth has been removed. The booster is authorized for adults 18 years of age and older.
- **Contraindications:**
 - History of anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine has been moved from CONTRAINDICATIONS to PRECAUTIONS. Per the updated [NACI statement](#), recent studies have shown that most of the individuals who had severe immediate allergic reactions (i.e., anaphylaxis) after a previous dose of mRNA vaccine can be safely re-vaccinated with the same vaccine or another mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (see NACI statement for references). Re-vaccination in a controlled setting was safe and well tolerated with predominantly no, or mild, reactions after re-vaccination (see precautions below). Emerging evidence also suggests that many of these severe immediate allergic reactions following mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are likely not IgE-mediated and therefore have a low risk of recurrence after future vaccine doses.
- **Precautions:**
 - For individuals with a history of anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, re-vaccination (i.e., administration of a subsequent dose in the series when indicated) may be offered with the same vaccine or the same mRNA platform if a risk assessment deems that the benefits outweigh the potential risks for the individual and if informed consent is provided. Prior to re-vaccination, consultation with an allergist or another appropriate physician (e.g., Medical Health Officer) is advised. If re-vaccinated, vaccine administration should be done in a controlled setting with expertise and equipment to manage anaphylaxis, with an extended period of observation of at least 30 minutes after re-vaccination. An associated footnote has been added to indicate that while such individuals may be offered a viral vector vaccine, re-vaccination with an mRNA vaccine is preferred due to the better effectiveness and immunogenicity of mRNA vaccines and the possible adverse effects specifically associated with viral vector vaccines (e.g., Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome [TTS]).
 - For individuals with suspected hypersensitivity or non-anaphylactic allergy to COVID-19 vaccine components, consultation with an allergist is no longer recommended. The vaccine should be administered in a controlled setting with expertise and equipment to manage anaphylaxis, with an extended period of observation post-vaccination of at least 30 minutes.
 - Content related to those who experienced a physician-diagnosed myocarditis or pericarditis event following a previous dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine has been revised to clarify that deferral of all additional doses of a COVID-19 vaccine is recommended (i.e., deferral of any COVID-19 vaccine). NACI will be reviewing this recommendation in the coming weeks, and will issue updated advice if indicated.

Please remove page numbers: 1-6 dated November 1, 2021
Please add new page numbers: 1-6 dated November 12, 2021

COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine SPIKEVAX™ (Moderna)

- See revisions above for COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine COMIRNATY™ (Pfizer-BioNTech) related to the following sections: **Indications, Doses and Schedule, Booster Doses, Contraindications, Precautions.**
- **Administration:**
 - Content has been added to indicate the vial should not be punctured more than 20 times.
 - Content added to Footnote C indicating that Health Canada has authorized a 2-month shelf life extension (from 7 months to 9 months) for certain lots of US-labelled vaccine with English-only vial and carton labels. Corresponding lots can be found in the [Health Canada alert](#).
- **Addendum:**
 - The addendum has been revised to allow for the pooling of residual vaccine to constitute a 0.25 mL or 0.5 mL dose.

Please remove page numbers: 1-5 dated November 1, 2021
Please add new page numbers: 1-5 dated November 12, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccine VAXZEVRIA™/COVISHIELD (AstraZeneca/Verity Pharmaceuticals)

- **Indications:**
 - A link to the new COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page has been added.
- **Doses and Schedule:**
 - Footnote F has been added to indicate that the 2nd dose may be given with Janssen COVID-19 vaccine (Ad26.COV2.S [recombinant]) if AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine is not available. However recipients should be advised that mRNA vaccine is preferable for a 2nd dose for those without a contraindication to mRNA vaccine because of improved protection against COVID-19.
 - The eligibility criteria for individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised have been removed as this content is now included in the COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page.
- **Booster Doses:**
 - The eligibility criteria for booster doses have been removed as this content is now included in the new COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page.
- **Precautions:**
 - Content related to those who experienced a physician-diagnosed myocarditis or pericarditis event following a previous dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine has been added to clarify that deferral of all additional doses of a COVID-19 vaccine is recommended (i.e., deferral of any COVID-19 vaccine).

Please remove page numbers: 1-5 dated November 1, 2021
Please add new page numbers: 1-4 dated November 12, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccine (Ad26.COVS.S [recombinant]) (Janssen Inc.)

- **Indications:**
 - A link to the new COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page has been added.
- **Doses and Schedule:**
 - Footnote C has been added to indicate that Janssen COVID-19 vaccine (Ad26.COVS.S [recombinant]) may be given as a second dose if AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine is not available. However recipients should be advised that mRNA vaccine is preferable for a 2nd dose for those without a contraindication to mRNA vaccine because of improved protection against COVID-19.
 - The eligibility criteria for individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised have been removed as this content is now included in the COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page.
- **Administration:**
 - Footnote D has been updated to indicate that the manufacturer printed expiry date on the vial should be disregarded. The correct expiry date will be on the outside of the carton and should be retained until all vials from the carton have been used.
 - Content under opened multidose vial has been revised for clarity; storage times after vial puncture are not cumulative.
- **Booster Doses:**
 - The eligibility criteria for booster doses have been removed as this content is now included in the new COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility page.
- **Precautions:**
 - Content related to those who experienced a physician-diagnosed myocarditis or pericarditis event following a previous dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine has been added to clarify that deferral of all additional doses of a COVID-19 vaccine is recommended (i.e., deferral of any COVID-19 vaccine).

Please remove page numbers: 1-5 dated November 1, 2021
Please add new page numbers: 1-4 dated November 12, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccine Screening Checklist

The screening checklist has been updated as follows:

- Question #2 under Contraindications has been revised to include a prompt to ask if an allergist or appropriate physician (e.g., Medical Health Officer) was consulted following anaphylaxis to a previous dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.
- Question #4 under Precautions has been revised to apply to any previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Question #5 under Precautions has been added to screen for any medications or treatment that can affect the immune system (e.g., high dose steroids, chemotherapy) and to refer to the online document, Immunosuppressive Therapies and Timing with COVID-19 Vaccination.

Please remove page number: 1 dated October 6, 2021
Please add new page number: 1 dated November 12, 2021

Please also remove the Title Page and Table of Contents for Part 4 – Biological Products dated October 2021 and replace with the enclosed updated Title Page and Table of Contents dated November 2021.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Stephanie Meier, Senior Practice Leader, BCCDC (telephone: 604-707-2577 / email: stephanie.meier@bccdc.ca).

Sincerely,



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