

# Make Sure You Are Up-To-Date With Vaccines

\*Information is current as of October 11, 2023

## COVID-19 Vaccines This Fall: What You Need to Know



Everyone six months and up should get the updated COVID-19 vaccine this fall. COVID-19 vaccination is safe and effective and remains the best protection against severe illness, hospitalization, death and long-term health complications.

### What is different about the COVID-19 vaccine being offered this fall?

The updated vaccines are designed to target the Omicron XBB.1.5 strain of the virus that is currently circulating in Canada. **Health Canada has authorized** two updated COVID-19 vaccines this fall (Pfizer's "Comirnaty" and Moderna's "Spikevax").

Getting a dose of the updated vaccine will boost immunity and protect against the currently circulating strains of the virus as we head into colder weather and more indoor activities.

### Who should get the updated COVID-19 Vaccine?

**Ontario's Ministry of Health, Health Canada,** and the **Canadian Pediatric Society** recommend the 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine for **everyone 6 months and older** this fall as long as it has been at least 6 months since a previous COVID-19 vaccine or COVID-19 infection.

The updated vaccine is especially recommended for people at higher risk of severe illness, including pregnant people, people over 65, and people managing chronic health conditions.

### What is the updated vaccine dosing schedule? How do I know if I am "up-to-date"?

For those 5 years of age and older, a **single dose of the updated vaccine** is all you need, regardless of previous vaccination status and even if you've never had any previous COVID-19 vaccinations. This is because most people aged 5 and up likely already have some COVID-19 immunity, either through previous vaccination, infection, or both.

Children aged 6 months to 5 years need multiple doses of COVID-19 vaccines to be up to date, including at least 1 dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine. If you have a child under 5 years old, talk to your doctor about the right timing and doses for your child.



## Influenza Vaccine “Flu Shot”

### **Influenza vaccination is recommended for everyone aged 6 months and older.**

The flu shot is especially recommended for people at higher risk of getting really sick from the flu such as pregnant people, children under 5, people over 65, and people with chronic health conditions. Just like COVID-19, the flu virus changes over time so the vaccine formula is updated every year to help protect against the specific strain of the virus that is circulating in Canada.

## When Can I Get my Influenza and COVID-19 Vaccines?

The vaccines are currently being rolled out across the province with the aim of vaccinating highest risk community members first. The vaccines will be available for the general population around the end of October.



**Ask your family doctor if they are offering COVID-19 and influenza vaccines** this fall. If you have an appointment coming up, ask if you can get your vaccines at that time.

Other options for accessing vaccines this fall:

- **COVID-19 vaccines:** you can also use the provincial booking portal to make an appointment by visiting [www.ontario.ca/book-vaccine](http://www.ontario.ca/book-vaccine) or calling 1-833-943-3900.
- **Influenza vaccines:** you can also get your flu shot from a participating pharmacy or through your local public health unit.

**It is safe to receive your updated COVID-19 vaccine and influenza “flu” vaccine at the same time.**

Your baby or child can also receive their COVID-19 and influenza vaccines at the same time or any time before or after other routine vaccinations.



**If you have children under 5:** It is highly recommended to get them vaccinated for COVID-19, influenza (“the flu”) and pertussis (whooping cough) because they are at greater risk of severe complications from these respiratory illnesses.

**If you are pregnant:** It is highly recommended that you get vaccinated for COVID-19 and the flu. The flu and COVID-19 are more severe during pregnancy and can cause complications. Vaccines are safe and effective during pregnancy and antibodies from vaccines are passed to the fetus and to your baby through breastmilk, providing protection to your newborn.

**If you are 60 or older or have health conditions** that might make you higher risk of getting really sick from respiratory illnesses, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you (and family members you care for) should get other vaccines to prevent other serious illnesses such as RSV, pneumococcus and whooping cough.

