

Public Health Update from Southwestern Public Health



For Health Care Providers in Oxford County, Elgin County, and the City of St. Thomas

July 22, 2022

An Update from Southwestern Public Health

Special Edition: What You Need to Know about COVID-19 Vaccine for Children Under 5

ELIGIBILITY

- On July 14, 2022, [Health Canada authorized Moderna Spikevax](#) COVID-19 vaccine for use in children 6 months to 5 years.
- On July 21, [Ontario announced children aged 6 months to 5 years old](#) become eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine through the provincial booking system starting July 28. **Ministry Guidance is not yet published.**
- [NACI Recommendations:](#)
 - A complete series with Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine (25 mcg) may be offered to children 6 months to 5 years of age who do not have contraindications to the vaccine at least 8 weeks apart (discretionary recommendation).
 - Children who are in this age group who are moderately to severely immunocompromised may be immunized with a primary series of three doses, at an interval of 4 to 8 weeks (discretionary recommendation).
 - At this time, this vaccine should not be administered concurrently (i.e., same day) with other vaccines (live or non-live) (strong recommendation). This is for AEFI reporting purposes.
 - Children must be the minimum age by the date of their vaccination or older.

VACCINE STORAGE & HANDLING

- Pharmacy professionals may administer COVID-19 vaccines to pediatric populations under five years of age. The full Ontario College of Pharmacists guidance can be found [here](#).
- **Pharmacies and primary care providers who are interested in participating in the vaccine roll-out can request a supply directly from public health at 1-800-922-0096.** Ask to speak with the Vaccine Preventable Disease team for assistance. Initial supply is limited.
- Only full vials (10 doses per vial) will be available for pharmacy and primary care orders – pre-filled syringes will not be available at this time. Please plan your vaccine doses accordingly to prevent wastage.

Southwestern Public Health
www.swpublichealth.ca
1-800-922-0096



- Per [Moderna Spikevax Product Monograph](#):
 - Vials can be stored refrigerated between 2° to 8°C (36° to 46°F) for up to 30 days prior to first use.
 - Unpunctured vials may be stored between 8° to 25°C (46° to 77°F) for up to 24 hours.
 - Once the vial has been needle-punctured, it can be stored at room temperature or refrigerated, but must be discarded after 24 hours.
 - Let vial stand at room temperature for 15 minutes before administering.

LOCAL CLINIC INFORMATION

- Southwestern Public Health will welcome children aged 6 months to 5 years as of July 28, 2022, at all vaccine clinics **except at local GO-VAXX Bus clinics**. Visit www.swpublichealth.ca/covid19vaccine for locations.
- A parent or guardian is required to be present during the vaccination for this age group.
- **ACTION:** GO-VAXX Buses will not have this paediatric formula available (only ages 5+). Please inform patients who have expressed interest in the GO-VAXX Bus.

PATIENT-FACING RESOURCES

- kidshealthfirst.ca – User-friendly and easy-to-navigate website with information divided into sub-categories of parents, youth, children, and providers. Created by the Children’s COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Table and endorsed by Canada’s leading children’s hospitals.
- Printable fact sheets from the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy, including “[Reasons to Vaccinate My Young Child](#)” and “[Timing of COVID-19 Vaccines for Young Children](#).”
- aboutkidshealth.ca – User-friendly website from SickKids Hospital in Toronto.

SUPPORT FOR PATIENT DISCUSSIONS

- The Ministry of Health [prepared a Q&A guide for healthcare providers](#) to help guide patient discussions.
- **Further support messaging from the Ministry of Health:**
 - Although most children who become infected have no symptoms or mild symptoms, some can become very sick and require hospitalization.
 - Ages 0–4 have among the highest rate of COVID-19 related hospitalization in Ontario youth, with more than 1,000 hospitalizations since 2020. (Public Health Ontario data)
 - Even with a past infection, the COVID-19 vaccine helps to further improve immune response from a future infection.
 - Every child is encouraged to be vaccinated, especially if they are immunocompromised or have other serious medical conditions.
- **Further support messaging from Health Canada:**
 - Health Canada received an application from Moderna to expand the indication of Spikevax on April 29, 2022. After completing a thorough and independent scientific review of the evidence, the Department has determined that the benefits of this vaccine for children between 6 months to 5 years of age outweigh the potential risks.
 - Health Canada has placed terms and conditions on the authorization requiring Moderna to continue monitoring and providing information to Health Canada on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine in this younger age group.

- Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) will continue to closely monitor the safety of this vaccine in Canada and internationally and will take action if any safety concerns are identified.
 - Health Canada conducted a detailed review of safety and efficacy data from clinical trials of the Moderna Spikevax vaccine to support the authorization of the vaccine in children aged 6 months to 5 years.
 - The vaccine was well tolerated, and no safety signals were identified from the trial.
 - The study used a two-dose vaccine regimen of 25 micrograms each, with the second dose to be administered 4 weeks after the first dose. This dose is one half of the dose for children 6 to 11 years of age (50 mcg) and one quarter of the dose for people 12 years of age and older (100 mcg).
 - The safety and efficacy data for the Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine was generated in participants aged 6 months to 5 years of age as part of an ongoing Phase 2/3 randomized, observer-blind, placebo-controlled study in the United States and Canada. Approximately 6,403 children 6 months to 5 years of age were enrolled; 4,792 children received Spikevax and 1,598 children received a placebo.
 - The clinical trial showed that the immune response in children 6 months to 5 years of age was comparable to that seen in 18 to 25-year-olds from a previous study.
 - Efficacy among children aged 6 months to 5 years was assessed at a time when Omicron was the predominant variant circulating in the U.S. and Canada. The two-dose vaccine was 51% effective against infection from the Omicron variant in children under 2 years of age and 37% effective among those who were 2 to 5 years of age. This is consistent with the efficacy estimates observed in adults during the Omicron wave.
 - Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to protect our families, communities and ourselves against COVID-19. Evidence indicates that vaccines are very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.
- **Further support messaging from NACI:**
 - Canadian and international post-market safety surveillance data for other mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in older populations have reported the rare risk of myocarditis and/or pericarditis with mRNA vaccines, which varies by sex, age, interval between doses, vaccine dose, and vaccine product. **Current data suggests the risk of myocarditis and/or pericarditis in younger children is lower than that of adolescents or young adults.** ([link](#), page 11)