

COVID-19 Immunization Update

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



June 22, 2021

An Update from Dr. Joyce Lock, Medical Officer of Health

Please share with staff as appropriate.

What You Need to Know This Week

1. SECOND DOSE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD ASTRAZENECA AS A FIRST DOSE

- On June 17, 2021, the Public Health Agency of Canada [released updated recommendations](#) from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) on first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in Canada. These updates are based on current scientific evidence and NACI expert opinion.
- In making its recommendations, NACI considered:
 - The increasing availability of mRNA vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna) in Canada;
 - Emerging evidence suggesting better immune responses when a first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine is followed by a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA vaccine;
 - The risk of Vaccine-Induced Immune Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia (VITT) associated with viral vector vaccines (AstraZeneca, Janssen) but not associated with mRNA vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna); and
- **For first doses, NACI recommends that:**
 - An mRNA vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna) is preferred to start a vaccine series, unless there is a contraindication
 - A viral vector vaccine (AstraZeneca, Janssen) may be offered to start a vaccine series when an mRNA vaccine is inaccessible or contraindicated
- **For second doses, NACI recommends that:**
 - Individuals who received a first dose of an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna) should be offered the same mRNA product for their second dose. If the

same product is not readily available, or the product used for the first dose is unknown, another mRNA vaccine is considered interchangeable and should be used to complete the series.

- An mRNA vaccine **is now preferred** as the second dose for individuals who received a first dose of the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine, based on emerging evidence of a potentially better immune response from this mixed vaccine schedule and to mitigate the potential risk of VITT associated with viral vector vaccines.
- People who received two doses of AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine can rest assured that the vaccine provides good protection against infection and very good protection against severe disease and hospitalization.
- Receiving a second vaccine dose for a two-dose schedule is essential to provide better and longer-term protection against COVID-19 for individuals and for the entire community. [Full details on the NACI website.](#)
- Further reading from the Ministry of Health: [Q&A for Health Care Providers on Mixed COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine Schedules](#)

2. REMINDER: ASTRAZENECA DOSE INTERVAL

- Recently [Ontario announced](#) people who received a first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine can now receive their second dose 8 weeks later. This previously was a 12-week interval.
- Additionally, they can choose to receive AstraZeneca or an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) for their second dose.
- Everyone is encouraged to be vaccinated in the same location they had their first dose to manage local vaccine inventory.