



Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Second Dose Delays

Due to delivery delays in the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine, the Ontario Government has needed to adjust its vaccination plans. To protect access to second doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for those who have already received their first dose, Ontario will:

- Maintain the recommended maximum interval of 21-27 days for long-term care, retirement and First Nations elder care home resident groups.
- Increase the maximum interval of up to 42 days between the two doses for all other groups.

The recommended interval is being maintained for those who are most at risk for severe illness and death thereby needing the highest level of protection from the vaccine. At this time, residents living in Long Term Care Homes and high-risk Retirement Homes, are being prioritized for all first doses of vaccines.

The above approach is grounded in evidence and supported by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

This direction will be revisited as vaccine availability changes.

Quick Facts about Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine:

- It requires 2 doses to be fully immunized, with 95% efficacy according to clinical trials.
- Although Pfizer-BioNTech was approved by Health Canada for an interval of 21-27 days between the two doses, their data were based on thousands of study participants who received the second dose between 19 and 42 days.
- Our experience with other vaccines shows that people whose booster dose is given later than recommended by the drug manufacturer will have a similar, if not, better immune response.
- Increasing the vaccine dosing interval has been adopted in other Canadian provinces (including Manitoba and Alberta) as well as other countries (including the United Kingdom).
- How much immunity does one dose give you?
 - Based on limited study data it appears to be 92%, but real-world experience is limited.

Resources:

Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines (National Advisory Committee on Immunization)
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html>

Ontario Adjusts Vaccination Plan in Response to Pfizer-BioNTech Shipment Delays (Ontario Government News Release-January 25, 2021)
<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/60091/ontario-adjusts-vaccination-plan-in-response-to-pfizer-biontech-shipment-delays>