

September 2, 2021

TO: Saskatchewan Health Authority
Indigenous Services Canada- Saskatchewan Region
Northern Intertribal Health Authority
Saskatchewan Medical Association
Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association
Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals
Saskatchewan College of Paramedics
Saskatchewan College of Respiratory Therapists
Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan
Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan
Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch

Re: Provision of COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Doses to Select Populations

Dear Colleagues:

The Government of Saskatchewan is providing mRNA COVID-19 booster doses to select populations as a phased approach. Current evidence shows that, compared to the general population, specific immune compromised individuals may require a booster dose for optimal immune response after a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series. Residents in congregate living settings, many of whom received 2 doses within 42 days December to February, may also begin to see waning immunity 8 months or later after completion of their primary series. Current international evidence shows that the administration of an additional COVID-19 mRNA dose elicits antibody levels that significantly exceed antibodies seen after any two-dose primary COVID-19 vaccine series in specific populations at higher risk.

Select recipients of two doses of COVID-19 vaccines born in or before 2009 should receive a booster dose of the same vaccine brand as the first or second dose, a minimum of 28 days after their second dose to boost protection against emerging COVID-19 variants and to reduce their risk of breakthrough COVID-19 disease. If the resident received a mixed mRNA schedule for first and second doses, either mRNA product may be used for the booster dose (**Refer to Table 1**). If the resident received an AstraZeneca dose followed by an mRNA dose, the same mRNA vaccine should be used for the booster dose. Any mRNA vaccine can be used after a two-dose AstraZeneca series. If there are contraindications to mRNA vaccines, AstraZeneca may be used for the booster dose. AstraZeneca is only available at public health clinics.

Although no research data exists, clinical experts have advised that at this time Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine and non-Health Canada approved vaccine recipients can receive booster doses as they become eligible. Saskatchewan will offer one mRNA dose as a booster for select populations who have received a Janssen/Johnson & Johnson one dose vaccination. Individuals who received a non-Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine and have received one additional dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (based on Public Health Agency of Canada guidelines) would be considered fully immunized (i.e. equivalent to receiving a two dose Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine series). Saskatchewan will offer an additional, second mRNA dose as a booster dose as they become eligible.

In order to protect Saskatchewan's most vulnerable populations as their immunity wanes, a phased approach to the provision of booster doses in Saskatchewan is recommended as outlined below. The first phase has purposely been kept small to ensure that the focus stays on increasing the proportion of the population with first and second doses.

Phase One (September 7, 2021) includes:

- Transplant recipients (including solid organ, islet cell, tissue and hematopoietic stem cell transplants).
- Recipients of stable, active treatment (chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy) for malignant hematologic disorders
- Recipients of an anti-CD20 agent (e.g. rituximab, ocrelizumab, ofatumumab).
- Long-term care home and personal care home residents

Phase Two (October 2021)*

- Other immunocompromised and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals as supported by evidence and expert opinion
- Individuals aged 80 and older
- Individuals living in other congregate living settings
- Health Care Workers

Phase Three (November 2021)*

- Other identified at-risk populations as informed by emerging evidence

*Phases two and three will be further refined as evidence emerges

Healthcare provider and specialty health programs should contact individuals to schedule their booster dose no sooner than 4 weeks after their second dose. Long-term care residents can be immunized by facility staff, and personal care home residents can be immunized by pharmacists or public health nurses as applicable.

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All COVID-19 vaccines licensed by Health Canada are safe and effective, and offer good protection against strains of the virus including the Delta variant. There is preliminary information on the safety of additional COVID-19 doses. It is expected that individuals may experience mild to moderate symptoms (e.g., fever, chills, aches and pain at the injection site) after additional COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Saqib Shahab', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Saqib Shahab
Chief Medical Health Officer

Table 1: Additional COVID-19 Dose Recommendations

Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3
COVISHIELD	COVISHIELD	Pfizer
COVISHIELD	COVISHIELD	Moderna
COVISHIELD	AstraZeneca	Pfizer
COVISHIELD	AstraZeneca	Moderna
AstraZeneca	AstraZeneca	Pfizer
AstraZeneca	AstraZeneca	Moderna
AstraZeneca	COVISHIELD	Pfizer
AstraZeneca	COVISHIELD	Moderna
COVISHIELD	Pfizer	Pfizer
COVISHIELD	Moderna	Moderna
AstraZeneca	Pfizer	Pfizer
AstraZeneca	Moderna	Moderna
Pfizer	Pfizer	Pfizer
Moderna	Moderna	Moderna
Pfizer	Moderna	Moderna
Pfizer	Moderna	Pfizer
Moderna	Pfizer	Pfizer
Moderna	Pfizer	Moderna
Pfizer	AstraZeneca	Pfizer
Pfizer	COVISHIELD	Pfizer
Moderna	AstraZeneca	Moderna
Moderna	COVIDSEHILD	Moderna
Janssen/Johnson & Johnson	Pfizer	
Janssen/Johnson & Johnson	Moderna	

Note: AstraZeneca may be given to individuals who have a contraindication to mRNA vaccines. AstraZeneca vaccine is only available from Public Health.