

**To:** Nova Scotia Health Care Practitioners and Immunizers

**From:** Dr. Shelley Deeks, Deputy Chief Medical Officer of Health

**Date:** July 5, 2022

**Re:** *Updated list of those considered moderately to severely immunocompromised*

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On June 3, 2022, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) published updated guidance on COVID-19 vaccines in Canada to the Canadian Immunization Guide. This update included a revised list of those considered to be moderately to severely immunocompromised. The list was reviewed and revised following requests for further clarification on the criteria and after reviewing the published literature on the subject.

The revised list of those considered moderately to severely immunocompromised has been adopted in Nova Scotia as follows:

- Immunocompromised due to solid tumour or hematologic malignancies or treatments for these conditions **\*updated\***
- Receipt of solid-organ transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy
- Hematopoietic stem cell transplant (within 2 years of transplantation or taking immunosuppression therapy)
- Immunocompromise due to chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cell therapy targeting lymphocytes
- HIV with AIDS-defining illness or tuberculosis diagnosis in last 12 months before starting vaccine series, **or** severe immune compromise with CD4<200 cells/uL **or** CD4%<15%, **or** without HIV viral suppression **\*updated\***
- Recent (within the last 12 months) treatment with the following categories of immunosuppressive therapies: anti-B cell therapies (monoclonal antibodies targeting CD19, CD20 and CD22), high-dose systemic corticosteroids, alkylating agents, antimetabolites, or tumor-necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors and other biologic agents that are significantly immunosuppressive. A list of eligible treatments can be found [here](#).
- Chronic kidney disease on dialysis **\*new\***
- Moderate to severe primary immunodeficiency with associated humoral and/or cell-mediated immunodeficiency or immune dysregulation. See primary immunodeficiency page [here](#).

The revised list expands those who are considered moderately to severely immunocompromised in Nova Scotia and will also expand eligibility for a three-dose primary series and shortened booster interval (120 days) for individuals who meet the criteria above.

Some individuals, especially those who are newly identified as moderately to severely immunocompromised based on the revised list, may not have received all doses for which they are eligible.

- If these individuals received only two primary series doses and no booster doses, they can receive an additional (third) dose to complete their primary series 56 days after their second dose.
- If these individuals have already received one or two booster doses, these individuals are eligible for an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine 56 days after their most recent booster dose.

Moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals who are booking their additional dose at a 56-day interval should email [C19compassionate@novascotia.ca](mailto:C19compassionate@novascotia.ca). When emailing, individuals will be required to indicate how they meet moderate to severe immunocompromise criteria. Individuals should be aware that immunization providers may confirm eligibility criteria and that they should bring a list of medications and other documentation which they may have (e.g. prescription bottles, insurance notes) regarding eligibility for an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

For more information on those considered moderately to severely immunocompromised, see [COVID-19 vaccine: Canadian Immunization Guide](#) and [NACI's Summary of Updates in the Canadian Immunization Guide as of June 3, 2022](#).