

To: Nova Scotia Health Care Practitioners and Immunizers

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

Date: December 19, 2022

Re: *Concurrent COVID-19 Vaccine Administration in Ages 6 months and older and Moderna Spikevax Bivalent (Original/Omicron BA.4/5)*

Concurrent administration in ages 6 months to 5 years

On December 9, 2022, NACI published [recommendations](#) on the concurrent administration of COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines in ages 6 months and older, expanding their previous recommendations to the youngest age cohort.

Nova Scotia has accepted these recommendations as follows:

- Individuals aged 6 months of age and older may be given COVID-19 vaccines concurrently, on the same day, or at any time before or after non-COVID-19 vaccines (including live and non-live vaccines).

Consent form updates reflective of this change will be completed by the end of this week.

Moderna Spikevax Bivalent (Original/Omicron) BA.4/5

On November 3, 2022, [Health Canada authorized](#) the Moderna Spikevax Bivalent (Original/Omicron [BA.4/5]) COVID-19 vaccine for use as a booster dose in persons aged 18 and older. On the same day, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) published [recommendations](#) on the use of Moderna BA.4/5 bivalent. To effectively implement this change, Nova Scotia (NS) will start offering this product in the new year.

In response, Nova Scotia updated its COVID-19 vaccine program as follows:

- An age-appropriate Omicron-containing bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should be offered for the fall dose for those who have completed their primary series.
- Starting January 2, 2023:
 - Bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines available for the fall dose will include:
 - **Moderna Bivalent (BA.4/5) (50 mcg) for individuals aged 18 and older.**
 - **Pfizer Bivalent (BA.4/5) (30 mcg) for individuals aged 12 and older**
 - In an effort to streamline the COVID-19 immunization program, Nova Scotia will no longer offer Moderna Bivalent BA.1 vaccine. The relative effectiveness of a booster dose of Moderna Bivalent BA.4/5 compared to

Moderna Bivalent BA.1 or Pfizer Bivalent BA.4/5 is not yet known due to the absence of head-to-head comparisons between these bivalent vaccines.

- Nova Scotia's fall program will continue through the winter months to ensure that a dose is available for all who are eligible, including those who are recovering from infection or who received a booster dose over the summer months.

Each dose of Moderna Bivalent BA.4/5 contains 25 mcg of mRNA encoding for the ancestral strain and 25 mcg of mRNA encoding for the Omicron (BA.4/5) strain for a total of 50 mcg per 0.5 mL dose. Efficacy and safety of Moderna Bivalent BA.4/5 was inferred from clinical trial data of Moderna Bivalent BA.1 and is expected to be similar to that vaccine. Moderna Bivalent BA.4/5 is authorized as a booster dose only and should not be given for the primary series.

Moderna Bivalent BA.4/5 presentation is a 5-dose vial with a royal blue cap and grey label. Please note that the royal blue cap colour is the **same** as that for the monovalent Moderna COVID-19 vaccine authorized for use in ages 6 months to 5 years. Providers should continue to carefully read the product label before administering a dose of COVID-19 vaccine given the complexity of the COVID-19 vaccination program and the potential for error. Additionally, Health Canada issued a [health professional risk communication](#) on the Moderna BA.4/5 bivalent vaccine to indicate that the vaccine will be distributed with product vials and cartons labelled in English only and that the dose (50 mcg) and volume (0.5 mL) do not appear on these labels and/or cartons.

For more information, see Health Canada's [regulatory decision summary](#) for Moderna Bivalent BA.4/5, NACI [recommendations](#), and the [product monograph](#).

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the COVID-19 vaccination program in Nova Scotia.