

COVID-19 Bivalent Vaccines



October 26, 2022

What is the bivalent COVID-19 vaccine?

Bivalent means that this vaccine causes the immune system to create antibodies against **two different types of COVID-19 virus**, as opposed to the original monovalent COVID-19 Vaccine. The Moderna bivalent targets the original COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) virus as well as the Omicron (BA.1) variant. The Pfizer bivalent vaccine targets original COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) virus and the BA.4/5 variants. Lab studies show the bivalent vaccine generates a stronger immune response than the original vaccine, so it should be more effective against the current Omicron strains.

Is it safe?

Yes! Health Canada has determined that both the bivalent Moderna and Pfizer booster are safe and effective. Clinical trial results showed that a booster dose of the bivalent Moderna Spikevax vaccine triggers a strong immune response against both Omicron (BA.1) and the original SARS-CoV-2 virus strain. It was also found to generate a good immune response against the Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants, and is expected to extend the durability of protection. The Pfizer vaccine is similarly effective against all Omicron subvariants. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommends both vaccines equally. Individuals should get whatever vaccine is available to them as soon as possible.

Who can get it?

The Moderna bivalent vaccine is available for adults 18 years of age and older who are recommended to receive a fall booster dose. The Pfizer bivalent vaccine is available to individuals 12 years of age and older.

When can I get it?

Bivalent vaccines are widely available **now** at public health clinics and pharmacies across the country - you should get yours as soon as possible!

I already have three doses, do I need another one?

YES. You definitely do need a bivalent vaccine. We know that especially with the Omicron variant, immunity from prior vaccination or infection can fade. This means getting boosted with bivalent vaccines are incredibly important to stay as protected as possible, especially as we enter the fall/winter where we will see a surge in cases and new variants as well.

<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/frequently-asked-questions-about-covid-19-vaccination.aspx#What-is-the-new-Bivalent-booster-vaccine-and-what-does-it-mean>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2022/09/health-canada-authorizes-first-bivalent-covid-19-booster-for-adults-18-years-and-older.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/naci-summary-september-1-2022.pdf>

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-covid-19-vaccine-booster-doses.pdf>