

# COVID-19 Bivalent Vaccines

September 27, 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 bivalent vaccine is an adapted version of the Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine. It targets the original COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) virus as well as the Omicron (BA.1) variant. 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 the bivalent Moderna Spikevax booster is 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.

## Who can get it?

For adults **18 years of age and older** who are recommended to receive a fall booster dose, NACI recommends that the authorized dose of a bivalent Omicron containing mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should be offered.

## When can I get it?

They are available **now**. Individuals eligible for fall boosters, especially those at increased risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19, should not delay their planned vaccination in anticipation of a bivalent Omicron-containing COVID-19 vaccine.

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

Three doses of original mRNA COVID-19 vaccines **continue to provide strong and sustained protection** against severe outcomes following COVID-19 infection.<sup>3</sup> However, the Omicron variant has demonstrated it is partially evasive of immunity from the original COVID-19 vaccines or from previous infection with variants prior to Omicron.

<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>