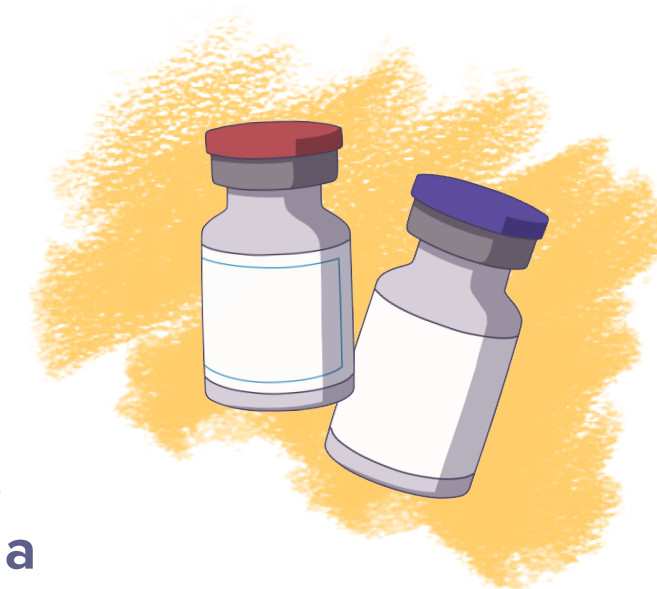


UPDATED! December 18, 2023

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Fall 2023 Updated mRNA COVID-19 VACCINES

For people
6 months
and older



- More than **13.5 billion** doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been given around the world.¹ The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends a Fall 2023 updated COVID-19 vaccine dose for people aged 6 months and older.

Why are Fall 2023 updated COVID-19 vaccine doses recommended?

Getting an updated COVID-19 vaccine dose in Fall 2023 will give you the best protection from infection, serious illness, and death.² Updated vaccines build back protection and give more protection against newer variants.²

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON IMMUNIZATION

NACI recommends a Fall 2023 updated COVID-19 vaccine dose for:



➔ **Everyone 6 months and older²**

The updated COVID-19 vaccine is especially important for people who:



- ✓ Are 65 years and older
- ✓ Live in a group setting (e.g., long-term care)
- ✓ Have a weakened immune system or serious health condition
- ✓ Are pregnant
- ✓ Identify as First Nations, Metis, or Inuit
- ✓ Belong to equity-deserving populations (e.g. racialized, living with a disability)
- ✓ Provide essential community services

What are the updated COVID-19 vaccines?



The updated vaccines for Fall 2023 target the XBB.1.5 strain of COVID-19.

M Moderna Spikevax[®] mRNA

XBB.1.5

- For people 6 months and older
- Approved by Health Canada (Sept 2023)

P Pfizer Comirnaty[®] mRNA

Omicron XBB.1.5

- For people 6 months and older
- Approved by Health Canada (Sept 2023)

N Novavax Nuvaxovid[®] Protein-based

XBB.1.5

- For people 12 years and older
- Approved by Health Canada (Dec 2023)

Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time as other vaccines, including flu vaccines.

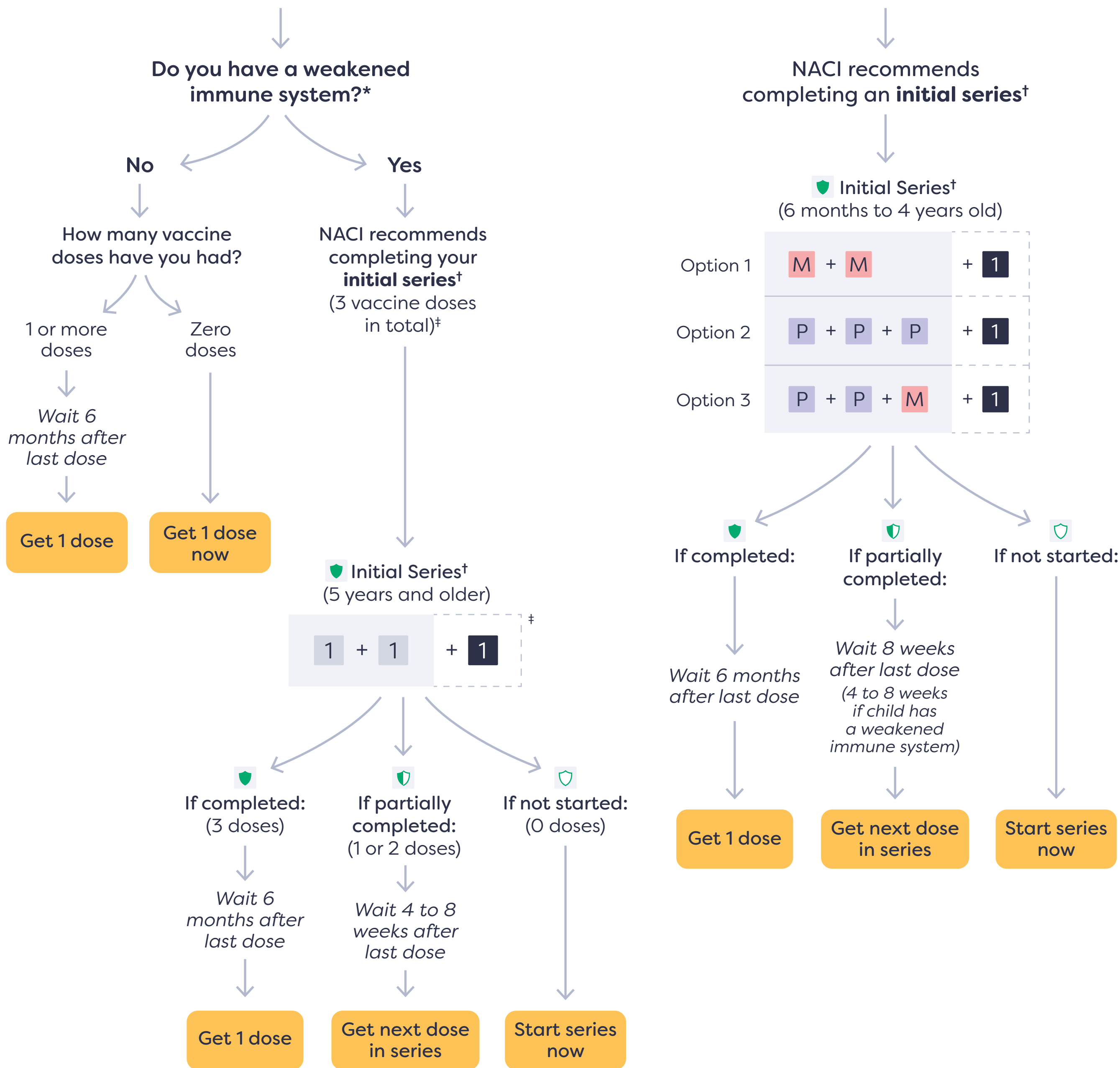
Find the most recent NACI 🇨🇦 guidance here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-26-covid-19-vaccine.html>

When should I get my next updated COVID-19 vaccine dose?

➔ For people 5 years and older

➔ For children 6 months to 4 years old



* **1** For people with a weakened immune system, the initial series includes 1 extra vaccine dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. This includes people who have specific health conditions or who take certain drugs that affect the immune system (e.g., DiGeorge syndrome, chemotherapy). The extra vaccine dose can be **M** or **P**.

† **1** An initial series builds strong initial protection against COVID-19.

1 Initial series doses can be **M**, **P**, **N**, **A**, or **J**.

‡ Only 1 dose of **J** is needed to complete an initial series. For people with a weakened immune system, 1 extra vaccine dose (**1**) would still be needed.

M = Moderna COVID-19 vaccine dose

P = Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine dose

N = Novavax COVID-19 vaccine dose (approved for 12 years and older)

A = AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine dose (approved for 18 years and older)

J = Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine dose (approved for 18 years and older)

Does it matter which updated vaccine I get?

For people 6 months to 4 years old with a weakened immune system, the Moderna Spikevax® updated vaccine is preferred because there are fewer doses. For people 5 years and older, either the Moderna Spikevax® or Pfizer Comirnaty® updated vaccines are preferred.²

Do I need to get the same COVID-19 vaccine brand for every dose?

No. The brand of your Fall 2023 vaccine does not need to match the brand of your other doses.

Why do I need multiple COVID-19 vaccine doses?

Just like influenza, the virus that causes COVID-19 continues to evolve. The mRNA vaccines give strong protection against severe illness, but the protection starts to fade after about 6 months. It fades more quickly in older adults. Updated vaccine doses target more recent variants. Getting an updated vaccine dose is especially important for people at higher risk of severe illness (see page 1).

What if I don't know if my recent illness was COVID-19 or not?

If you have not had a confirmed COVID-19 infection, use the date of your last known COVID-19 infection or vaccine dose. There are no safety concerns if you get a COVID-19 vaccine shortly after having a COVID-19 infection.

Should people who have had a COVID-19 infection get updated vaccine doses?

Yes. Getting an updated COVID-19 vaccine dose will give you the strongest possible protection.

What are the side effects of updated vaccines?

Many people notice mild side effects like arm pain and fever that get better in a few days.

Inflammation of the heart (myocarditis) and of the sac around the heart (pericarditis) has happened rarely after mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.² The risk of myocarditis may be lower with additional doses than with the initial doses.

The risk of myocarditis after an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine is much lower than the risk of myocarditis due to COVID-19 infection.³ The Pfizer Comirnaty® vaccine was preferred for initial doses for those 12 to 30 years because myocarditis happened more in this age group with the 100 mcg initial dose of the Moderna Spikevax® vaccine. The dose of the updated Moderna Spikevax® XBB.1.5 vaccine for those 12 and older is 50 mcg. For people 5 years and older, either the Moderna Spikevax® or Pfizer Comirnaty® updated vaccines are preferred.²



**Getting Fall 2023
COVID-19 vaccines**

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Best protection from getting
severely ill or dying from COVID-19



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¹ Mathieu E et al. Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). Our World In Data. Accessed November 29, 2023. <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>

² COVID-19 vaccines: Canadian Immunization Guide. Government of Canada. Accessed November 29, 2023. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-26-covid-19-vaccine.html>

³ Voleti N et al. Myocarditis in SARS-CoV-2 infection vs. COVID-19 vaccination: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Front. Cardiovasc. Med.* 2022;9:951314. doi: 10.3389/fcvm.2022.951314