Public Health Agency of Canada | Agence de la santé publique du Canada

Canada

Saving Lives and Livelihoods

Importance of Staying Up-to-Date with COVID-19 and Routine Vaccinations

December 2022

PROTECTING AND EMPOWERING CANADIANS
TO IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH

COVID-19 pandemic: the current situation

- **Goal:** protect people living in Canada from severe health outcomes due to infections.
- **The situation:** fall and winter bring challenges to public health in Canada including:
  - decreasing or waning immunity against COVID-19 (from previous infection or previous vaccination);
  - potential waves of infection driven by new versions of Omicron or new variants;
  - respiratory viruses, like influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV);
  - strained healthcare resources; and,
  - shifting public priorities and risk perceptions with regards to COVID-19.

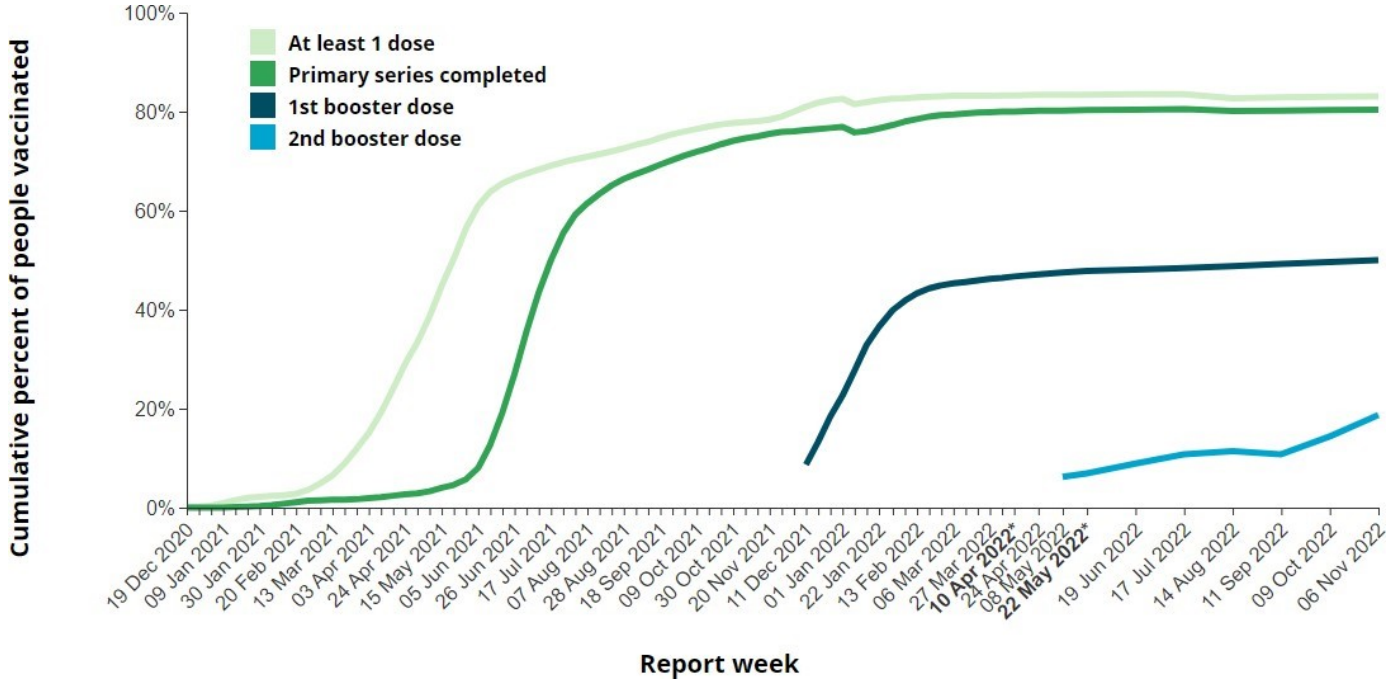
- **Vaccination is one of our most effective public health tools against COVID-19** and many other vaccine-preventable diseases (e.g., influenza, measles, polio).
- Canada has COVID-19 vaccine options that have a very good **safety profile** and offer **very good protection against severe disease**.
- We need support from partners like you to **help everyone stay up to date with COVID-19 and routine vaccinations, including influenza.**

COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage in Canada at a Glance

As of November 6, 2022:

- 50% of all Canadians have completed their primary series **and** received at least 1 additional dose.
- Nearly 19% of all Canadians have completed their primary series **and** received 2 additional doses.
- Millions of people 18+ do not have up-to-date COVID-19 protection from vaccination.

Uptake in Canadian population as of November 6, 2022:



Data Source: Health InfoBase Canada

Impact and Benefits of COVID-19 Vaccines

Canada has one of the lowest rates of COVID-19 deaths and hospitalizations in the G7/internationally.

A COVID-19 study published by PHAC showed that the efforts of people living in Canada in achieving **high vaccine coverage and adhering to public health measures have prevented up to:**

760,000 lives lost, 1.85 million hospitalizations, and 30 million COVID-19 cases as of April 2022.

- Influenza and COVID-19 can result in serious complications for some people, as well as lost time from work and school.
  - By preventing severe outcomes, COVID-19 and influenza vaccines also help **reduce pressures on our strained healthcare providers and hospitals.**
  - Staying up to date with vaccinations helps **reduce lost time from work and school and interruptions to activities.**
- Individuals who have had ≥2 doses of COVID-19 vaccine have a **lower risk of post-COVID-19 condition (long COVID) compared to unvaccinated people.**

Sources:
Ogden NH, Turgeon P, Fazil A, Clark J, Gabriele-Rivet V, Tam T, Ng V. Counterfactuals of effects of vaccination and public health measures on COVID-19 cases in Canada: What could have happened? Can Commun Dis Rep 2022;48(7/8):292–302. https://doi.org/10.14745/ccdr.v48i78a01
Our World in Data as of October 4, 2022
Razak, F., Shin, S., Naylor, C. D., & Slutsky, A. S. (2022). Canada's response to the initial 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic: a comparison with peer countries. CMAJ : Canadian Medical Association journal / journal de l'Association medicale canadienne, 194(25), E870–E877. https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.220316

The Basics: What You Need to Know about COVID-19 Boosters

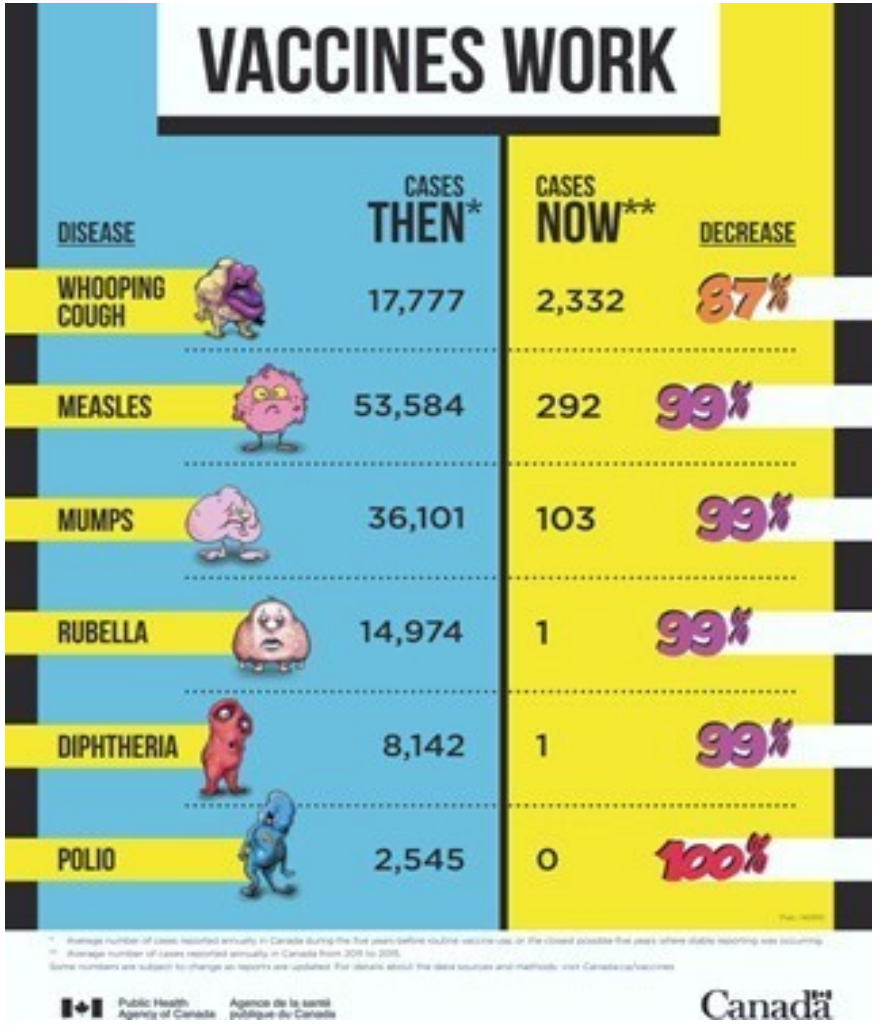
- Booster doses **increase your immune response to improve protection** that may have decreased over time, including improving protection against severe outcomes.

- **A fall booster dose is recommended for adults ≥65 years of age as well as those 12 to 64 years of age who are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. All others 12 to 64 years of age may be offered a fall booster dose.**
- **The recommended interval between the fall booster dose and the previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine or a SARS-CoV-2 infection (whichever is later) is 6 months.**
  - A shorter interval of up to 3 months may be warranted depending on the local context.
  - Check with provincial/territorial and local public health units to get the latest information on booster eligibility.
- **COVID-19 vaccines may be given at the same time as other vaccines** (e.g. influenza vaccine).

- **A bivalent product is preferred for the booster dose** as these products contain mRNA against the original strain and against Omicron, and are expected to broaden the immune response against variants of concern.
- Health Canada has now authorized bivalent products produced by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech.
  - **Available products are:** Moderna Bivalent BA.1; Moderna Bivalent BA.4/BA.5; Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent BA.4/BA.5.

Vaccines are one of the most effective tools that we have in public health

"Vaccines Work" Six vaccine-preventable diseases in Canada



- The COVID-19 pandemic caused disruptions to routine vaccination.
- Other countries are seeing an increase in vaccine-preventable diseases among the unvaccinated (e.g., polio and measles).
- To prevent these diseases from making a comeback in Canada, it is critical to **stay up-to-date with routine vaccinations**.
- During fall and winter, it is especially important to stay up to date with influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations.

Call to Action: Be a Vaccination Champion

Click on the graphics!

- **Inform others:** Share credible COVID-19 information on staying up-to-date with vaccinations (toolkits).

- **Champion healthy practices:**

  Through the fall and winter, lead by example by continuing to follow good personal protective practices to protect against COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses and encourage your community members to do the same.

  – Be sure to stay **up-to-date** with all **vaccines**, including influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations.
  – Wear a well-fitting, well-constructed **mask or respirator** in crowded indoor spaces during respiratory illness season.
  – **Wash your hands** frequently.
  – **Stay home if sick**.

Questions?

Interactive Question and Answer Period

Submit your questions using the Slido link below:

https://www.slido.com/

Event code: **3934607**

Key Messages to Share with Your Communities – Vaccination

- One of the best ways to protect yourself from becoming really sick is to **stay up to date with your COVID-19 and annual influenza (flu) vaccines, as well as other routine vaccinations**.

- COVID-19 vaccines are **very effective** at **preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death**.

- Evidence also suggests that **vaccinated individuals are less likely to experience post-COVID condition** (long COVID), where long-term effects are experienced after the initial COVID infection.

- Current COVID-19 vaccines are not as effective at preventing transmission or infection against the most recent variants as they were against the original virus.

Key Messages to Share with Your Communities – Layers of Protection

- Having **several layers of protection is the most effective way to reduce the risk of getting and spreading viruses** during respiratory season. These layers include:
  - Staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations
  - Getting your annual influenza vaccine
  - Properly wearing a well-constructed, well-fitting mask or respirator
  - Washing your hands
  - Staying home if sick
  - Covering your coughs and sneezes
  - Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces frequently

- Some people may continue to wear masks, and others may not. Remember to be kind, understanding, and respectful of personal choices.

- When we reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses, we not only help to protect our most vulnerable but also help decrease pressure on an already strained healthcare system.

Key Information: COVID-19

Fact Sheets: COVID-19 Vaccines

- COVID-19: Stay up to date with your vaccinations
- The facts about COVID-19 vaccines

Travel guidance

- COVID-19 border and travel measures – update effective October 1, 2022
- Proof of Vaccination for travel within Canada and outside Canada

Toolkits

- COVID-19 Vaccines Communications toolkit
- Healthcare provider toolkit

Awareness Resources (multilingual: available in 15 other languages)

- Ask the experts video series: COVID-19 vaccine questions
- Videos, audio, fact sheets and infographics

Digital Tools

- Hashtags, key messages, social media shareable content
- Get the facts about COVID-19 vaccines (social media shareable)

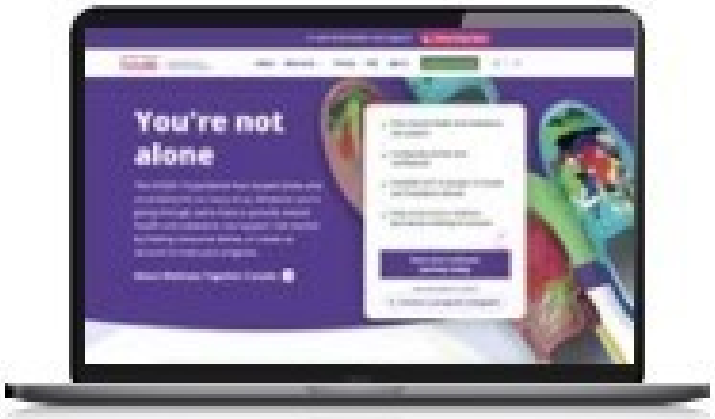
Other COVID-19 vaccination information

- Approved vaccines in Canada
- Reported side effects

Digital Tools: COVID-19

Click the graphics!

Wellness Together Canada: Mental Health and Substance Use



COVID Trends

We can all do our part in preventing the spread of COVID-19. For more information, visit Canada.ca/coronavirus or contact 1-833-784-4397

COVID-19 Vaccines in Canada by Age Group

	Primary Series	Booster dose
6 months – 4 years	✓ Two products are authorized and available: Moderna Original; Pfizer-BioNTech Original	**Not authorized**
5 – 11 years	✓ Two products are authorized and available: Moderna Original; Pfizer-BioNTech Original	✓ Offer to those at high risk of severe outcomes, may be offered to others. One product is authorized and available: Pfizer-BioNTech Original*
12 – 17 years	✓ Two products are authorized and available: Moderna Original ; Pfizer-BioNTech Original	✓ Offer to those at high risk of severe outcomes, may be offered to others. Bivalent** preferred. Two bivalent products are authorized and available (Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent BA.4/BA.5 and Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent BA.1)
Adults 18+	✓ Four products are authorized and available: Moderna Original; Pfizer-BioNTech Original; Novavax; Janssen	✓ Bivalent** preferred. Four bivalent products are authorized and available (Moderna Bivalent BA.1; Moderna Bivalent BA.4/BA.5; Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent BA.1; Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent BA.4/BA.5). Novavax (monovalent) is also authorized.

* Recommended for children 5-11 y.o. at high risk of severe illness due to COVID-19, including immunocompromised; all other children 5-11 may be offered a booster dose.
** Bivalent vaccines target both the original SARS-CoV-2 virus and the Omicron variant.

Data Source: Approved COVID-19 Vaccines