

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

September 13, 2022

Bivalent COVID-19 vaccine arrives

The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine has arrived in the region. Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) is offering the new booster formula to eligible people at their clinics, and the public is urged to book an appointment for their shot.

“A bivalent vaccine means it has two types of a virus in it, in this case, the original COVID-19 strain, and the Omicron variant. This practice has been used for many years in flu vaccines, which protect against multiple strains of influenza in one shot,” says Dr. Kit Young Hoon, Medical Officer of Health at NWHU. “The bivalent booster dose is an effective way to protect yourself and your community from severe impacts of COVID-19,” Dr. Young Hoon says.

As per Ontario’s Ministry of Health, the local roll-out of the bivalent booster vaccine will be as follows:

Beginning Sept. 12:

- People aged 70+
- Indigenous people aged 18+ and their household members aged 18+
- Health care workers
- Long term care and congregate settings
- Retirement homes / Elder care lodges
- Immunocompromised people aged 12+
- Pregnant people

Beginning Sept. 26:

- Anyone aged 18+

Those getting a booster dose should wait at least three months since their last COVID-19 vaccine. Children and youth aged 5-17 can also now receive a booster dose, however, not the bivalent vaccine formula.

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In addition, NWHU continues to offer first, and second shots of the COVID-19 vaccine to anyone who is eligible, which now includes children aged 6 months and older. Appointments for the COVID-19 vaccine can be made at www.nwhu.on.ca or by visiting a local pharmacy.

NWHU notes that this year's influenza (flu) vaccine is not yet available, and the public will be advised when appointments for flu shots can be made – usually near the end of October.

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