



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

October 13, 2022

### **Bivalent COVID-19 booster now available for all Hamiltonians 12+** *Don't 'fall' behind on COVID-19 vaccination, stay up to date and get all the shots recommended for you*

**HAMILTON, ON** – Following [Health Canada approval of the Pfizer bivalent vaccine](#) and in alignment with direction from the Ontario Government, effective Monday, October 17, 2022, all Hamiltonians 12 years of age and older will be eligible for a bivalent COVID-19 booster dose, as long as they meet the following eligibility criterion:

- They've completed their primary vaccine series (received a first and second dose);
- Recommended six months (minimum three months) since their most recent dose; and
- They have not been infected with COVID-19 over the past three months.

The bivalent booster is recommended and available to eligible community members 12+, regardless of how many booster doses they have received previously.

In anticipation of an increase in respiratory illnesses this fall and winter, it is important that everyone gets vaccinated to protect themselves and those around them from severe outcomes of the illness and reduce the pressure on Hamilton's significantly strained healthcare capacity.

As evidence shows that vaccine protection decreases over time, to get stronger protection against COVID-19, Hamilton Public Health Services and its Hamilton Healthcare Partners are recommending all Hamiltonians 12 years of age and older to stay up to date with vaccination and book an appointment for a bivalent COVID-19 booster at [hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine](https://hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine), as soon as they are eligible. Appointments can be booked on Hamilton's booking tool 14 days in advance, with new appointment dates being added daily.

Residents are also strongly encouraged to check [with local pharmacies](#) who are offering bivalent COVID-19 booster doses, as neighbourhood pharmacists are anticipated to administer nearly 75 per cent of all COVID-19 vaccines locally this upcoming respiratory illness season.

With COVID-19 transmission forecasted to increase this fall, boosters are even more important for high-risk individuals, who should receive the booster three months after their last dose. Most community members under the age of 65 should receive their booster dose at the recommended six-month interval. All individuals aged 12 to 17 years of age are eligible starting October 17, 2022 for a bivalent booster, which better protects against the currently circulating COVID-19 variants.

### ***Booking a vaccination appointment***

Earlier this week, Hamilton Public Health Services transitioned to a new online vaccine appointment booking system. The new online booking tool provides a more user-friendly approach to booking local vaccine appointments online that includes the ability for community members to view available appointments and notification of when a vaccine clinic is closed or all appointments are booked for a particular clinic. This was not possible through the former online booking system.

The online vaccine booking system continues to be accessed by visiting [hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine](https://hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine) and accepts bookings for eligible residents with an email address or cell phone number. Individuals without an email address or cell phone number can call the Public Health Services COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline: 905-974-9848, option 7 to book an appointment. Translation services are available by phone.

### ***Flu shots available starting November 1, 2022***

Earlier today, the Ontario Ministry of Health also announced that flu shots will be available to the general population beginning November 1, 2022 through individuals' Primary Care providers, including family doctors and nurse practitioners, along with public health units and participating neighbourhood pharmacies. More information on this year's local flu shot campaign will be available later this month.

### **QUICK FACTS**

- As of end of day October 11, 2022, 83.9 per cent of Hamiltonians have received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and 80.7 per cent have completed their primary series by receiving a second dose. Nearly half (49.5 per cent) of Hamiltonians have received a third dose and 16.5 per cent have received a fourth dose. 26,830 fall bivalent vaccine booster doses have been administered in Hamilton since becoming available on September 12, 2022.
- Community members aged five years and older can receive a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as, or at any time before or after any other vaccines, including the flu shot. Children between six months and under five years are recommended to wait 14 days before or after the administration of another vaccine before getting their COVID-19 vaccine.
- It is recommended that individuals six months to under 12 years of age stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccination. Although this age group is not eligible for a bivalent vaccine, the monovalent vaccine provides an extra layer of protection

against the health effects of COVID-19. For information about eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination for all populations, visit [hamilton.ca/COVIDvaccines](https://www.hamilton.ca/COVIDvaccines). Children six months of age and over and individuals 18 years of age and over can walk-in at Hamilton Public Health Services led clinics to receive a monovalent COVID-19 vaccine.

- All vaccination planning is based on and contingent on available COVID-19 vaccine supply, and the necessary health and human resources.
- Individuals who require transportation assistance to a COVID-19 vaccine appointment can call DARTS at 905-529-1717 and press 0 or check the [Ontario Community Support Association](#).

## QUOTES

“With immunity from a previous infection and vaccine protection decreasing over time, we continue to encourage all Hamiltonians to stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccination in preparation for the fast approaching influenza and respiratory illness season. As we escape cooler temperatures and spend more time together indoors this fall, Hamiltonians 12 to 17 years of age can now book an appointment for a bivalent COVID-19 booster to strengthen their ability to fight off COVID-19 infection and reduce the risk against severe COVID-19 outcomes like hospitalization, ICU admission and death.

– Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, Medical Officer of Health

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus](https://www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus)
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-coronavirus>
- <https://kidshealthfirst.ca/>
- Public Health Services’ COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline: 905-974-9848, option 7 or [phscovidvaccine@hamilton.ca](mailto:phscovidvaccine@hamilton.ca)

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