

Which COVID-19 vaccines are available in clinics in Nova Scotia?

There are two COVID-19 vaccines available in clinics in Nova Scotia: Moderna and Pfizer. Both vaccines are mRNA vaccines.

Who is able to receive a COVID-19 vaccine in Nova Scotia?

Anyone 12 and older is eligible to receive a vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine is available for people 12 and older. The Moderna vaccine is available for people 18 and older.

Can I receive the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine?

The AstraZeneca vaccine is no longer available as part of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 immunization program except in situations where a person is unable to receive an mRNA vaccine due to an allergy.

What is the difference between AstraZeneca and COVISHIELD?

The AstraZeneca vaccine is a viral vector-based vaccine (also known as ChAdOx1-S) and Canada has authorized two manufacturers who produce this vaccine. These are:

- AstraZeneca (brand name AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine)
- Verity Pharmaceuticals and Serum Institute of India (SII) in collaboration with AstraZeneca (brand name COVISHIELD Vaccine)

COVISHIELD is a brand name like Pfizer and Moderna are brand names for the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

I received AstraZeneca for my first dose and now want it for my second. How can I get it?

Anyone who received a first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine on or before April 21 would have received a notice to the email on their patient file advising them to reschedule their second dose to before June 30, when the remaining AstraZeneca vaccine in Nova Scotia was set to expire.

Why can't you order more AstraZeneca?

COVID-19 vaccines are procured and distributed by the Government of Canada. They have donated Canada's allotment of AstraZeneca vaccine and are only making available Pfizer and Moderna to provinces and territories.

I have an allergy to mRNA. How do I get the AstraZeneca vaccine?

Nova Scotia has secured a very limited amount of AstraZeneca vaccine, which expired at the end of October. Anyone who has an allergy to an ingredient in the mRNA vaccines should speak with their healthcare provider. Healthcare providers can issue patients a referral to the Special Immunization Clinic. This clinic has the expertise to support patients with vaccine allergies. If the Special Immunization Clinic determines that the mRNA vaccine cannot be administered, they will make the necessary arrangements to provide the AstraZeneca vaccine.



Nova Scotia received a shipment of Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. When will it be made available to the public?

We received a very small shipment, 250 doses of the Janssen vaccine. We intended to make this vaccine available to people who work in high-risk settings under the mandatory vaccination protocol because of the potential risk they pose to those they support and because they would otherwise not choose to be vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine. At this time, we do not intend to make this vaccine available for the general population.

There are Nova Scotians who don't want an mRNA vaccine. Why not give them the choice?

We have received a very small amount of the Janssen vaccine, and we intended to use it where it will have the greatest benefit. We understand some Nova Scotians would prefer this vaccine; however, we know that the effectiveness of this vaccine is lower than that of mRNA vaccines and there may be increased waning of protection. Nova Scotians who have received a dose of Janssen outside the province are strongly encouraged to receive one additional dose of mRNA vaccine to be optimally protected.

What about people with allergies to mRNA vaccines? Why are they not candidates for Janssen?

We have a process to support people with mRNA vaccine allergies, which includes working with the Special Immunization Clinic to secure a viral vector vaccine for these individuals. If it is determined someone cannot receive an mRNA vaccine for medical reasons but can receive a viral vector-based vaccine like Janssen or Astra Zeneca, we will work with the clinic to get them immunized.

Some provinces are immunizing youth who are 11 and turning 12 by December. How do I get my child vaccinated?

We cannot speak to the decisions of other jurisdictions. The available COVID-19 vaccines are not approved for use in anyone under the age of 12. Your child will be eligible to schedule an appointment as of the day they turn 12.

Moderna was approved for use in youth 12 to 17, but I can't book an appointment for my child. Why?

Moderna vaccine is being used in Nova Scotia for persons 18 years of age and older. At this time we are continuing to use only Pfizer vaccine for youth 12 to 17 years of age, as the province has enough Pfizer vaccine to immunize all eligible youth and we have experience with this vaccine in this younger age group. In addition, there is a possibility that there are lower rates of myocarditis/pericarditis following Pfizer vaccine compared to Moderna vaccine. Myocarditis/ pericarditis has occurred rarely after both vaccines, and has occurred more often in adolescents and adults under the age of 30, more often in males than females, and more often after a second dose of the vaccine compared to the first dose. More information on myocarditis and pericarditis is available at:

http://policy.nshealth.ca/Site_Published/covid19/document_render.aspx?documentRender.IdType=6&documentRender.GenericField=&documentRender.Id=88001

What is considered fully vaccinated in Nova Scotia?

People are considered fully vaccinated 14 days after their second dose of a Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine (any two doses of AstraZeneca, Moderna or Pfizer, or the one-dose Janssen vaccine) or a World Health Organization authorized COVID-19 vaccine is considered fully vaccinated.



What is the difference between fully vaccinated and optimally protected?

Fully vaccinated refers to vaccine status for purposes such as travel into Nova Scotia and when required to produce proof of vaccination. Optimally protected means that you are fully protected against the COVID-19 virus. People who are optimally protected will no longer have to self-isolate if they are a close contact of a positive case, unless otherwise directed by public health.

I have received three doses of COVID-19 vaccine but none of my doses are mRNA. Can I still receive an additional dose of mRNA?

Anyone who has received three doses of any COVID-19 vaccine is not eligible to receive an additional dose of mRNA.

I have a family member who is homebound and needs to get the vaccine. How are they supposed to access it?

Anyone who is unable to attend a COVID-19 vaccination clinic because of significant health and mobility challenges can receive their vaccine at home. To request an in-home vaccine appointment call 211. You will undergo a screening to determine if you are eligible to receive a vaccine at home.

THIRD DOSES

Who is eligible for an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine?

Nova Scotia is making available one additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine to:

- people who are immunocompromised
- people who are required to travel for their work in order to meet the entry requirements or avoid isolation in the country they are conducting business

More information including eligibility, criteria and how to access one additional dose for people who qualify is available at <https://novascotia.ca/vaccineplan>.

I need to travel for work. How do I get another dose of vaccine?

If you are required to travel for work to a country that does not accept a mixed vaccine series you may be eligible to receive one additional dose of mRNA vaccine to meet the entry requirements or avoid self-isolation within the country you are required to conduct business.

To be eligible for one additional dose you must:

- be a Nova Scotia resident
- provide an official copy of proof of vaccination for each of the two doses you have received
- provide written confirmation from your employer that you are required to travel to a country as part of your job and that country does not accept a mixed vaccine series
- provide official confirmation or documentation from the country or location of travel that a mixed vaccine series does not permit entry or requires isolation upon entry

Submit your information and supporting documents by email to AdminINS@novascotia.ca for review. You will receive a response within 7 business days approving or denying your request. If your request is approved, you will receive details regarding next steps on receiving one additional dose.



I am immunocompromised. How do I get one additional dose of vaccine?

If you are immunocompromised or taking medications that can substantially affect your immune system, you may be eligible to receive one additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine 28 days after your primary series.

For more information including a list of conditions and medications please visit <https://novascotia.ca/vaccineplan>. If you are unsure if you qualify, please speak with your healthcare provider. After confirming you are eligible, you can book your appointment online at <https://novascotia.ca/vaccination> or by phone toll-free: 1-833-797-7772.

I need to travel for personal/discretionary reasons to a country that does not recognize a mixed series. How can I get a third dose of vaccine?

At this time, Nova Scotia is not making available additional doses available for personal or discretionary travel. Any change to this direction will be publicly communicated.

Can I buy a third dose?

COVID-19 vaccines in Nova Scotia are free. You cannot purchase an additional dose.

Can I receive a third dose in another province?

You will need to contact the jurisdiction directly. We cannot advise on the immunization programs of other jurisdictions.

Why are people who have to travel for work allowed to have a third dose and the rest of us aren't?

Some people are experiencing financial hardship because they are unable to travel for work due to some countries not recognizing a mixed dose series. As a result, the province has decided to offer one additional dose of vaccine for work-related travel in order to meet the entry requirements or avoid isolation in countries that do not recognize a mixed dose series.

To be eligible they must demonstrate an additional dose is required to continue working out of country and meet the following criteria:

- be a Nova Scotia resident
- provide an official copy of proof of vaccination for each of the two doses you have received
- provide written confirmation from your employer that you are required to travel to a country as part of your job and that country does not accept a mixed vaccine series
- provide official confirmation or documentation from the country or location of travel that a mixed vaccine series does not permit entry or requires isolation upon entry

BOOSTER DOSES

Who is eligible to receive a booster dose?

Booster doses are administered at least 6 months after a primary series. Those who are eligible include anyone 70 and older

- adult frontline healthcare workers who were double vaccinated with an interval of less than 28 days between their first and second dose
- people who received two doses of the AstraZeneca Vaxzevria/COVISHIELD vaccine or one dose of Janssen vaccine



The Province is also engaging with Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities on the best way to offer booster doses in those communities.

Which vaccine can I receive for my booster? I had AstraZeneca for my first two doses, can I have it for my booster?

NACI recommends that booster doses be an mRNA vaccine. Nova Scotia has adopted this recommendation. Only mRNA vaccines will be provided for booster doses in Nova Scotia.

When will the province make booster doses to other age groups?

The Province will continue to follow the NACI recommendations on booster doses. At this time, NACI has not recommended booster doses for other age groups or populations. NACI continues to monitor the evidence on the need for, and benefit of, a booster dose in other populations.

Why isn't the province prioritizing all healthcare workers like the initial rollout of the vaccine?

The Province has adopted the NACI recommendations on booster doses, which at this time only recommends that adult frontline healthcare workers who received both doses with an interval of less than 28 days between their first and second dose receive a booster at least six months after their primary series. Healthcare workers who received both doses on an interval of 28 days or more do not require a booster dose at this time.

How can people book a booster dose?

When they are eligible, Nova Scotians will be able to schedule a booster dose appointment online at <https://novascotia.ca/vaccination> or by calling the toll-free line: 1-833-797-7772.

Will healthcare workers receive their booster doses in healthcare worker clinics like last time?

Healthcare workers who are eligible to receive a booster can schedule their appointment online at <https://novascotia.ca/vaccination>.

Will the province set up healthcare worker clinics or community clinics like the initial rollout?

Pharmacies will continue to be our primary method of delivery for COVID-19 vaccines and this includes booster doses.

Is a booster dose mandatory for workplaces that have a vaccine mandate?

We would encourage anyone who is eligible for a booster dose to receive one. However, booster doses are not mandatory and are not required as part of the vaccine mandate.

Do you need a booster dose to be considered fully vaccinated?

You do not need a booster dose to be considered fully vaccinated at this time.

What about other essential services such law enforcement and paramedics? Last time you prioritized them and this time, they are not eligible for a booster.

The NACI recommendation is specific to healthcare workers who received their primary series with an interval between first and second doses of less than 28 days. In our initial vaccine rollout this primarily includes frontline healthcare workers. Other groups such as police and first responders received their primary series on a schedule of 28 days or more.



Why is the eligible age for First Nations and African Nova Scotian clinics age 30 and older? How did the Province determine the age cut-off for these clinics?

Throughout each stage of our COVID-19 vaccine rollout we have consulted with leaders from these communities to provide access to vaccine in a culturally responsive way that meets the needs of the communities. The eligible age and model of delivery for booster doses was determined in consultation with the community, just like the rollout of the primary series. Many members of these communities were prioritized for their primary series and because of NACI's recommendation of a 6 month interval to receive a booster due to potential increase risk of severe disease and waning protection over time, the eligible age for these communities reflects this guidance.

Is the age based on NACI recommendations?

NACI does not recommend an age for Indigenous or African Nova Scotian communities. The rollout of booster doses within these communities was determined in consultation with our Indigenous and African Nova Scotian partners. Many members of these communities were prioritized for their primary series and because of NACI's recommendation of a 6-month interval to receive a booster due to potential increase risk of severe disease and waning protection the eligible age for these communities reflects this guidance.

Why not make it available to everyone 18 and older in these communities?

We know that COVID-19 vaccines remain effective against severe disease. We also know that the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis following mRNA vaccine is higher in younger age groups. There is currently limited evidence on the need for booster doses in younger populations and the occurrence of myocarditis and pericarditis after a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine. As a result, and in consultation with these communities, we are making booster doses available to people 30 and older in these communities.

When you rolled out first and second doses in these communities the age was set at 55 and older. Why not start with 55 and older like last time?

We have always made decisions about vaccine rollout in partnership with the communities; however, one of the key differences between our initial vaccine rollout and booster rollout is supply. We had limited supply in early stages of our rollout. Now that supply is no longer an issue, we are able to decrease the eligible age for vaccine within these communities.

Why not make vaccine available to everyone 30 and older in that case?

We continue to follow the NACI recommendations on booster doses which at this time does not recommend a booster dose for the general population. You are also not eligible for a booster dose until at least 6 months after your primary series. The recommendations and our rollout take this into consideration with the rollout of booster doses.

Some provinces have announced they will make booster doses available to anyone 18 and older. Why can't Nova Scotia do the same?

We cannot speak to the decisions of other provinces regarding their vaccine rollout. In Nova Scotia we continue to follow the NACI recommendations which at this time do not recommend a booster dose for the general population. While rare, we also know that there is an elevated risk of myocarditis and pericarditis in younger age groups, in particular males and we know that the vaccine remains effective, particularly against severe disease.

COVID-19 VACCINE APPOINTMENTS

How do I schedule, reschedule, or cancel a COVID-19 vaccine appointment?

You can schedule your appointment online at novascotia.ca/vaccination using your Nova Scotia Health Card. You are encouraged to provide an email address and phone number at the time of booking to receive your Nova Scotia COVID-19 Immunization Record and any reminders by email.

If you are unable to schedule an appointment online or do not have a Nova Scotia Health Card, you can call toll-free 1-833-797-7772 and a booking agent can schedule your appointment by phone?

To reschedule or cancel your appointment you can use the confirmation email you will receive to the email address you provided at the time of booking or you can call the toll-free line 1-833-797-7772.

The toll-free line can only accept calls from phone numbers with a Canadian area code.

NOVA SCOTIA COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION RECORD

I never received an immunization record. How do I get one?

If you provided an email address or phone number at the time of booking you should have received an email from noreply@canimmunize.ca with your immunization record. You can request your record online at novascotia.ca/immunizationrecord.

If you are unable to access your record online you can call the vaccine receipt line toll-free 1-833-797-7772 and the booking agent can update your contact information, issue your record by email or mail you a paper copy.

How do I submit my out-of-province vaccination(s) to get a Nova Scotia COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination?

If you are a permanent resident or received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine in Nova Scotia, you are eligible to submit the dose(s) you received outside Nova Scotia's COVID-19 immunization program to receive a Nova Scotia Proof of Vaccination. Please visit <https://novascotia.ca/vaccineentry> for more details on how to submit your doses and required documentation. It can take up to three weeks to receive your Nova Scotia COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination.

If you are not a permanent resident or did not receive at least one dose of vaccine in Nova Scotia, you are not eligible for a Nova Scotia COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination. If you have been fully vaccinated before entering Nova Scotia, you can use the record(s) you received from the province, state or country you were vaccinated in as proof of full vaccination.

I am in the province for an extended period of time/international student, why can't I receive a Nova Scotia COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination?

Only permanent residents or people who received at least one dose in Nova Scotia are eligible to submit doses received outside Nova Scotia to receive a Nova Scotia COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination. If you have been fully vaccinated before entering Nova Scotia, you can use the record(s) you received from your home province, territory, state or country as proof of full vaccination.



My immunization record has an error/missing information. How do I get this fixed?

If your vaccine receipt has an error, is missing information or you can't access the receipt online using your Canadian Health Card number and the email address or phone number you used to book your appointment, call 1-833-797-7772 (Monday to Friday, 7am to 7pm) to report an issue with your vaccine receipt.

When calling to report an issue with your vaccine receipt, you may need to provide your:

- Name
- date of birth
- email address or phone number you used to book your appointment
- Health Card number
- type, date and location of COVID-19 vaccine you received (for each dose)

After you report an issue, it should take 2 weeks to get a new digital copy of your vaccine receipt (email is sent from noreply@canimmunize.ca). It can take longer if more information is needed.

Will my Nova Scotia immunization record be recognized outside Nova Scotia for travel?

This is considered proof of vaccination within Nova Scotia. It is not intended as a vaccine passport for travel. You will need to check with the jurisdiction you are travelling to about what documentation they will accept as proof of vaccination.

The country I am travelling to won't accept the Nova Scotia immunization record. I need the record updated with more information (stamp, QR code, etc). How do I get my record updated to meet their requirements?

The Nova Scotia immunization record is proof of vaccination within Nova Scotia. It is not intended as a vaccine passport for travel. We are unable to customize records. The Government of Canada is developing a standard proof of vaccination and Nova Scotia will align itself with that standard.

ADVERSE EVENTS AND VACCINE EXEMPTION

I had an adverse reaction to the vaccine. What do I do?

If you believe you are having an adverse reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine, you should speak to a healthcare provider or call 811. If it is an emergency go directly to the emergency room if you can safely do so or call 911. Healthcare providers in Nova Scotia are required by law to report certain adverse events following immunization to Public Health at the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

What does this mean for people who cannot be vaccinated?

The Proof of Full Vaccination Policy allows for medical exception to vaccination. There are very few medical reasons someone would be granted an exception.

What are medical reasons for not getting vaccinated?

There is limited number of specific medical reasons why someone should not or cannot get COVID-19 vaccine. They include:

- a history of severe allergic reaction (like anaphylaxis) after previous administration of a COVID-19 vaccine using a similar platform (mRNA or viral vector)



- allergy to any component of the specific COVID-19 vaccine or its container (polyethylene glycol for Pfizer's Comirnaty and Moderna's Spikevax COVID-19 vaccines)
- a history of major venous or arterial thrombosis with thrombocytopenia following vaccination with AstraZeneca's Vaxzevria COVID-19 vaccine
- a history of capillary leak syndrome following vaccination with AstraZeneca's Vaxzevria vaccine
- a history of myocarditis or pericarditis after a first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer Comirnaty or Moderna Spikevax)
- experiencing a serious adverse event after receiving your first dose of COVID-19 vaccine (a serious adverse event is defined as life-threatening, requires in-patient hospitalization or prolongs an existing hospitalization, results in persistent or significant disability, incapacity or in a congenital anomaly or birth defect)

Additionally, as a precaution, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommends that people who experienced myocarditis and/or pericarditis after a first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) should wait to get their second dose of mRNA vaccine until more information is available.

Immunosuppression, auto-immune disorders, pregnancy and breastfeeding are not medical reasons that prevent people from getting COVID-19 vaccine.

YOUTH AND COVID-19 VACCINES

I/my child has a fear of needles. How can I/they get vaccinated?

The IWK Health Centre has information online to support patients who have needle phobias: <https://www.iwk.nshealth.ca/COVID-19/nervous-about-needles> and a toll-free number for those who have significant needle anxiety/phobia.

The Nova Scotia Health Authority periodically hosts clinics for people with needle anxiety/phobias. We have forwarded your request to the Nova Scotia Health Authority for any available information on upcoming clinics.

Do children/youth need parental/guardian consent to receive their COVID-19 vaccine?

Nova Scotia does not have a minimum age for giving consent for healthcare decisions. It is recommended that parents or guardians and their children discuss consent for COVID-19 immunization.

However, parental/ guardian consent is not required for mature minors and consent given by mature minors cannot be overturned by parents or guardians.

A mature minor is a person under the age of 19 who is able to understand the purpose of the immunization, the benefits and possible reactions of the COVID-19 vaccine and the risk of not getting immunized. Mature minors can legally book an appointment and consent to or refuse immunizations. In order to be considered a mature minor the immunization provider must assess the youth's ability to consent and ability to understand the information given. If the youth is assessed as being unable to give informed consent, a substitute decision maker must be involved, for example, a parent or guardian.