



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

December 16, 2022

Bivalent COVID-19 booster protection available for all Hamiltonians 5+

*Protect yourself and your loved ones this winter, stay up to date on
vaccination*

HAMILTON, ON – Following [Health Canada approval of the Pfizer bivalent vaccine](#) and in alignment with direction from the Ontario Government, effective Wednesday, December 21, 2022, Hamiltonians five years of age and older will be eligible for a bivalent COVID-19 booster dose this respiratory illness season, as long as they meet eligibility criterion, including:

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

The bivalent booster targets the original COVID-19 virus and provides better protection against the variants currently circulating. With COVID-19 and a number of other respiratory illnesses present in Hamilton, it is important that everyone gets vaccinated to protect themselves and those around them from severe outcomes of COVID-19 and Influenza, and reduce the pressure on Hamilton's significantly strained healthcare capacity, including McMaster Children's Hospital.

Hamilton Public Health Services and its Hamilton Healthcare Partners are recommending all community members five years of age and older stay up to date with vaccination and book an appointment for a bivalent COVID-19 booster at 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 and clinic listings updated regularly. Residents are also strongly encouraged to check [with the 100+ local pharmacies](#) that are offering bivalent COVID-19 booster doses.

Walk-ins are being offered for community members six months of age and over to receive a flu shot and/or a monovalent COVID-19 vaccine at Hamilton Public Health Services clinics. Information on locations for getting a flu shot can be found at hamilton.ca/flu.

QUICK FACTS

- As of end of day December 15, 2022, 82 per cent of Hamiltonians have received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and 79 per cent have completed their primary series by receiving a second dose. 21 per cent of community members have received a booster dose within the previous six months.
- Community members six months of age 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.
- Hamilton Public Health Services online vaccine booking system continues to be accessed by visiting [hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine](https://www.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.
- Hamilton parents are reminded to also follow [the Ontario routine immunization schedule](#). If your child has missed vaccinations or if you are unsure about which vaccinations they have received, contact your health care provider or [Hamilton Public Health Services](#) to get their vaccination schedule up-to-date.

QUOTE

“With immunity from a previous infection and vaccine protection decreasing over time, we encourage all Hamiltonians to stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccination and get their annual flu shot as we continue to experience a significant respiratory illness season locally. As we spend more time together indoors during the cold weather months, parents and caregivers can book an appointment for their children to receive 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. Bart Harvey, Associate Medical Officer of Health

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 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

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