

Five to 11 Urgently Recommended to Get Vaccinated, Booster Dose Eligibility Updated

Update to York Region health care providers as of December 17, 2021

Even though the Omicron variant and the need for booster doses are currently the media focus, there is still an urgent need to vaccinate individuals aged five to 11, most of whom are currently unprotected against COVID-19. The incidence among five to 11-year-olds in York Region has increased significantly since October 2021; as of December 14, 2021, it was 164 cases per 100,000 population, which was over three times higher than the next highest rate of infection (40-year-olds).

It is critically important that eligible children are vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible. Starting off 2022 with as many students vaccinated as possible, even with one dose, will increase the likelihood we can avoid disruptions to in-person learning following the holiday break – something York Region Public Health acknowledges as essential for student achievement and mental health and well-being.

Please encourage your patients that are parents of five to 11 year-olds to get their kids vaccinated as soon as possible. Please visit york.ca/COVID19Vaccine for available appointments and clinics with walk-in availability for first and second doses.

Following this message is a letter template developed by the Ontario Medical Association (OMA). Please feel free to use this template to contact your patients with children 5 to 11 years of age to recommend vaccination.

Administer COVID-19 vaccine within your practice

If you would like to provide the COVID-19 vaccine in your practice and you are not yet onboarded, please complete the **Primary Care Physician Readiness Survey** and email the completed copy to covid19vaccine@york.ca. Please note, your clinic must have a designated vaccine fridge that meets Ministry of Health Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines.

COVID-19 Booster Dose Eligibility Updated

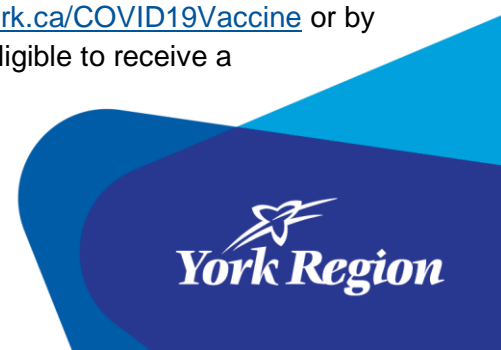
York Region Public Health is continuing to offer booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine **by appointment only** for the following groups, with an updated dose interval of three months (84 days) after receipt of the second dose of vaccine:

- York Region residents **50 years of age and older** (born in 1971 or earlier)
- Vulnerable older adults in congregate living settings
- Health Care Workers and Designated Essential Caregivers [as identified by the Ministry of Health](#)
- First Nations, Inuit and Metis and non-indigenous household members age 16 and older
- Those who received a complete series of viral vector vaccine (e.g., two doses of AstraZeneca vaccine or one dose of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine)
- Those who received two doses of a vaccine not approved by Health Canada

These groups can book an appointment at a Public Health clinic by visiting york.ca/COVID19Vaccine or by calling Access York at 1-877-464-9675. On December 20, 2021, individuals eligible to receive a booster dose would have received their second dose on or before September 27, 2021.

PUBLIC HEALTH

york.ca/COVID19Vaccine



On December 15, 2021, the Province of Ontario announced that all individuals 18 years of age and older will be eligible to receive a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine starting on Monday, December 20.

Due to high demand for booster doses, anyone aged 18 to 49 is advised to please seek vaccination at a participating pharmacy, primary care office or other alternative, to allow appointments at Public Health clinics to be used by those with higher risk of severity from COVID-19. Residents are encouraged to find a participating pharmacy at ontario.ca/bookvaccine or visit the Provincial vaccination portal at covid19.ontariohealth.ca.

For the complete list of groups eligible for booster doses, third doses and re-vaccination with COVID-19 vaccines, please see the [Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Vaccine Third Dose Recommendations](#) and the [COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#).

Up to date information on eligibility groups, available clinics and appointments can be found at york.ca/COVID19Vaccine.

With the Omicron variant of concern becoming a growing concern in Ontario, we strongly recommend everyone who is eligible for a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine to receive it as soon as possible.

Contact York Region Public Health

Thank you for all your efforts to support our immunization program in York Region. For more information, call our dedicated health care professional line at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday) or visit york.ca/healthprofessionals. For the latest information on COVID-19 in York Region, please visit york.ca/COVID19.

For questions regarding COVID-19 vaccine ordering please contact our Vaccine Inventory Program at COVID19vaccine@york.ca or 1-877-464-9675 ext. 50174.

TEMPLATE LETTER REGARDING COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR 5 TO 11 YEAR OLDS IN ONTARIO

This message was developed by the OMA section on Pediatrics. It can be adapted by your practice and distributed to patients with children 5 to 11 years of age. You may choose to also include the resource developed by the OMA section on Pediatrics, "[Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for kids?](#)"

Insert letterhead for your practice

Dear Patients,

As you may know, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, also called Comirnaty, was approved for children 5 to 11 years old on November 19. As your child's doctor, I strongly recommend that your child gets the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it becomes available to you.

I'd like to share some facts with you about the COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11, based on recent studies of the vaccine in children:

- The vaccine protects children from COVID-19: the vaccine was 90.7% effective.
- No serious side effects were seen. The most common side effects were those that often happen with other vaccines: pain where the needle was injected, tiredness, headache, muscle pain and chills.
- The dose for children is one-third of the adult dose. This dose was selected in part because it led to fewer side effects than the adult dose.
- The vaccine for children is two injections given at least 21 days apart, and ideally 8 weeks apart.
- The creation of this vaccine followed all required steps for the development of any vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccine can play an important role in keeping community transmission low and preventing school closures, which in turn is important for your child's mental and physical well-being.

We are learning more every day about the risks of COVID-19 for children. Some children who get COVID-19 - even those who are otherwise healthy - can end up in the hospital. Children who get COVID-19 can sometimes stay sick for many weeks or months - this is called Long COVID. I care about your child and I don't want them to get sick from COVID-19.

Vaccines work and they are a safe and important way to keep children healthy. I got the COVID-19 vaccine myself to protect myself against COVID-19.

If you have any questions or concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine or protecting your child against COVID-19, I am here to help and would be happy to discuss this with you. Please call the office to book an appointment. You can also refer to [this fact sheet](#) developed by Ontario pediatricians.

Sincerely,

Insert physician name