

COVID-19 Vaccination in Community Pharmacies

Always refer to the up-to-date version on the GNB [COVID-19 Vaccine](#) webpage.

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Introduction

Community pharmacies are accessible, community healthcare providers and an important partner in delivering COVID-19 vaccines.

While several resources are available to prepare for COVID-19 vaccinations, the purpose of this document is to provide information that is primarily related to community pharmacy operational plans in New Brunswick. **It is important to visit the GNB [COVID-19 Vaccine](#) webpage regularly for updates.**

A **Vaccine Command Centre** has been created to address vaccination clinic questions and issues of community pharmacies. Contact information for the Vaccine Command Centre will follow.

Education

All providers of COVID-19 vaccines are expected to maintain their competency and be knowledgeable. Pharmacy professionals are to refer to the [New Brunswick College of Pharmacists \(NBCP\)](#) for requirements of the administration of injections.

Information regarding COVID-19 vaccines and operational plans is subject to change. Links to resources are available online. **It is important to visit the GNB [COVID-19 Vaccine](#) webpage regularly for updates.**

COVID-19 vaccines approved in Canada

There are presently two COVID-19 mRNA vaccines in approved in Canada.

- Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine was authorized on December 9, 2020. Pfizer information including product monograph is available at [Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Information](#)
- Moderna COVID-19 vaccine was authorized on December 23, 2020. Moderna information including product monograph is available from [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)

Additional information specific to mRNA vaccines currently authorized ion Canada can be found in the [NACI Statement Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 Vaccines](#).

Vaccine safety

a) Anaphylaxis Management

Review the pharmacy's anaphylaxis protocol/plan management.

All clients must be observed for a minimum of 15 minutes after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. If there is a specific concern about a possible allergy to a component of the COVID-19 vaccine, an extended period of observation for 30 minutes post-vaccination may be warranted.

New Brunswick released a revised provincial protocol for the management of immunization related anaphylaxis in non-hospital settings in December 2020. It is inserted as [appendix 5.1 of the Immunization Program Guide](#).

Ensure anaphylaxis medication (e.g. epinephrine) and anaphylaxis management equipment is always on site.

b) Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI)

All health care providers in New Brunswick who administer vaccines (public-funded or non-public-funded) and/or care for clients who may have had an AEFI are required to report the event in writing to Regional Medical Officer of Health.

Serious AEFIs must be reported verbally and in writing within one working day; all others must be reported in writing within 5 business days.

c) Submitting an AEFI Report

The NB AEFI form supersedes that of the national AEFI form and user guide available on the PHAC website. Reporting information is available on the Government of New Brunswick (GNB) website.

Use the [Report of AEFI form](#) for reporting, and refer to the [Data Dictionary for Completing the New Brunswick AEFI Reporting Form](#) as necessary. The completed form is to be sent to the local public health office (contact information is included on the form).

Client eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine

The rollout plan for immunization is subject to change as additional vaccine brands and increased quantities become available. New Brunswick's overall rollout plan of the COVID-19 vaccine is available at GNB [COVID-19 Vaccine](#). Each priority group will be vaccinated in sequential order as determined by Public Health. Priority groups will be communicated once vaccine distribution from the federal government is confirmed.

The initial groups to be immunized in community pharmacies are individuals over the age of 85, 80 and 75, sequentially.

Distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine to community pharmacies

The brand of vaccine and the maximum quantity allotted to each community pharmacy will be impacted by the confirmation of vaccine quantities and arrival dates in the province by the federal government. This information will be communicated to community pharmacies as early as possible.

Vaccines will be allocated to community pharmacies using the following considerations:

- population in the present priority group eligible for vaccination by each zone/community;
- available immunizers identified by the community pharmacy, as well as the capacity;

- vaccine brand available at the time and the dose interval for each priority group; and,
- shipping and handling standard operating procedure and minimum shipping quantity.

Please refer to the [COVID-19 Vaccination Plan for New Brunswick](#) for updates.

Vaccines will be distributed on an assigned day to each participating pharmacy, along with their regular pharmaceutical delivery (if applicable).

McKesson ships vaccines according to the provincial [Standard Operating Procedure – Transportation of COVID-19 Vaccines: Pfizer BioNTech an Moderna Vaccines](#).

NOTE: Based on the recommendation from the vaccine manufacturers, further redistribution should not occur after product is received at the pharmacy.

Storage, scheduling and administration; reporting waste

a) Receipt and storage

It is important that pharmacists are equipped to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the vaccine (i.e. cold chain and other procedures).

Once vaccines are received at the pharmacy, they must immediately be stored in a [refrigerator suitable for vaccine storage](#). A purpose-built vaccine refrigerator (pharmacy, lab-style or laboratory-grade refrigerator) is the standard for storage of vaccines. Domestic refrigerators are not designed to meet the requirements for vaccine storage; therefore, precautions and modifications are needed if vaccines are stored in such refrigerators. Vaccine receipt should be documented on a Receiver Register COVID-19 Vaccine. See section 2.4 including Appendix D in the [Standard Operating Procedure – Transportation of COVID-19 Vaccines: Pfizer BioNTech an Moderna vaccines](#).

If a temperature excursion occurs, notify Regional Public Health immediately. See section 2.5 including Appendix E in the [Standard Operating Procedure – Transportation of COVID-19 Vaccines: Pfizer BioNTech an Moderna vaccines](#).

Storage requirements for pre-puncture for each vaccine and usage limits post-puncture are included in Table 1.

Table 1 – Schedules, doses and administration of COVID-19 vaccines

Product Brand Name	Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine	Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine
Type of vaccine	mRNA	mRNA
Authorized ages for use	16 years of age and older	18 years of age and older
Dose	0.3 mL (30 mcg of mRNA) ¹	0.5 mL (100 mcg of mRNA)

Schedule ²	2 Doses, 3 weeks apart	2 Doses, 4 weeks apart
Route of administration	IM	IM
Nature of the antigen	Transmembrane prefusion spike protein	Transmembrane prefusion spike protein
Adjuvant (if present)	None	None
Diluent	Yes	No
Primary storage requirements pre-puncture	-80°C to -60°C ³	-25°C to -15°C ^{3, 4}
Storage requirements pre-puncture ³	120 hours (5 days) at +2°C to +8°C and/or 2 hours up to +25°C	30 days at +2°C to +8°C and/or 12 hours at +8°C to +25°C
Usage limit post-puncture	6 hours at +2°C to +25°C ⁵	6 hours at +2°C to +25°C
Formats available	Multi-dose vial (6 doses) ¹ , preservative-free	Multi-dose vial (10 doses), preservative-free

1. After dilution, one vial contains 6 doses of 0.3 mL each. However, vial labels and cartons may state that after dilution, a vial contains 5 doses of 0.3 mL. Information in the product monograph supersedes the number of doses stated on vial labels and cartons. Low dead-volume syringes and/or needles can be used to extract 6 doses from a single vial. If standard syringes and needles are used, there may not be sufficient volume to extract a 6th dose from a single vial. Refer to the product monograph for choice of diluent, dilution instructions and type of syringes which can be used to extract 6 doses from a single vial.
2. Authorized schedule. For NACI recommendations on intervals between doses refer to NACI's [Recommended immunization schedule, by COVID-19 vaccine](#)
3. Protected from light during storage.
4. Do not store on dry ice or below -40°C.
5. After dilution, vaccine must be used within 6 hours.

b) Scheduling and administration

New Brunswick will not be using a central registry for priority groups assigned to community pharmacies. Booking client appointments is the responsibility of the pharmacy, using a method that best suits their operations. Both the first and second dose appointments should be booked at the same time. It is strongly recommended that the client receives the second dose at the same location as the first dose; however, this is not a requirement. At the time of first dose, the pharmacy must not set aside or reserve in stock vaccine for second doses. Second dose vaccine quantities will be included in future vaccine deliveries to the pharmacy.

It is crucial that scheduling is done to avoid wasting doses. Pharmacies must carefully plan the timing of clinics so that vaccines received from McKesson are used as soon as possible after receipt.

When booking appointments pharmacies can avoid wasting doses by creating a waiting list of clients in the current or immediate subsequent priority groups that could receive the vaccine on short notice for appointment cancellations or extra doses extracted from the vials. To prepare for this, clients on the waitlist should be contacted to ensure they are on standby.

REMINDER: Pfizer Biotech must be used within 120 hours when it stored at +2°C to +8°C. Time in transit from McKesson is included in the 120 hours.

REMINDER: Usage limit of vials post-puncture is 6 hours at +2°C to +25°C.

More information regarding the very important topic of preventing wastage is available in the [Direction to reduce unnecessary vaccine wastage at clinics](#).

c) Reporting wastage

Please review the document: [Direction to reduce unnecessary vaccine wastage at clinics](#).

The federal government requires that the province reports all vaccine waste on a weekly basis. Community pharmacies are required to share this information with Public Health to fulfill this requirement.

A [wastage report](#) must be filled out. Public Health is working on a web form that will allow community pharmacies to submit the information directly through the Drug Information SharePoint site.

Infection prevention and control (IPC) and medical supplies

PHAC provides [IPC guidance for ambulatory care settings](#).

Gloves are not recommended when providing any vaccine, which includes COVID-19 vaccines. If gloves are used, they must be changed after each client with proper hand hygiene before putting gloves on and after removal of gloves.

N95 respirators are not required, as immunization is not an aerosol-generating medical procedure (AGMP). Surgical masks must be worn; the use of face shields is optional.

Gowns are not required, but can be used at the discretion of the pharmacist.

Pharmacies will receive an amount of PPE and medical supplies to be used during vaccination corresponding to the vaccine allotment. See Appendix A for a list of the supplies that will be provided.

An initial start-up quantity of supplies and PPE will be sent to the community pharmacies as a stand-alone delivery by courier. Replenishment of PPE and supplies will be managed through the Vaccine Command Centre and the process will be communicated shortly.

Client consent and record of immunization

a) Consent

The Vaccine section of the Government of New Brunswick website contains a [Consent for Pandemic COVID-19 Immunization](#). A community pharmacy may develop their own consent form **provided it captures the same information on the provincial Consent for Pandemic COVID-19 Immunization**. The section "Reason for Immunization", used to identify groups such as long-term care residents and Indigenous – First Nation community members, will not be required on the Community Pharmacy consent form.

For additional information, refer to [Policy 2.6 - Consent for Immunization](#) of the Program Policies section of the [Immunization Program Guide](#).

Clients must be provided with information to assist them in making an informed decision about receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. To assist immunizers with obtaining an informed consent, information sheets are available in the tool kit for each vaccine found on the [COVID-19 Vaccination](#) website:

Moderna

- [Vaccine Information Sheet Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Vaccine After Care Sheet Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Pfizer BioNTech

- [Pre-vaccination Information Sheet Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Vaccine After Care Sheet Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Other

- [Patient Information Sheet-Information for pregnant and breastfeeding women](#)
- [Guidance for patients on persons with Autoimmune conditions and/or Immunosuppression](#)

b) Record of immunization for clients

The Record of Immunization is an official document that must be provided to clients after immunization.

Immunizers must provide the standard Record of Immunization: [Record of Immunization Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and Record of Immunization Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#). It can be printed before a scheduled clinic.

Initially, community pharmacies may be required to print the forms. Public Health is aiming to provide paper copies in the future.

Clients should be encouraged to present the Record of Immunization of the first dose when receiving their second dose.

Reporting administered doses

NBCP legislation requires the pharmacist to record all information included in Regulation 22.5 (a) to (h). This information must be retained as per Regulation 17.22.

All administered doses must be recorded in the Public Health Information System (PHIS). The information required for PHIS will be captured using the drug dispense message transmitted to the DIS from the local pharmacy information system (PIS). Public Health has met with all pharmacy vendors who will provide guidance documents to their pharmacy customers describing the steps to fulfill this requirement.

In exceptional circumstances, if the date of entry is later than actual day of administration, the drug dispense date must be adjusted. This may require “back dating” the dispense date in the pharmacy information system – please refer to your pharmacy system vendor for guidance.

New Brunswick residents without a Health Card Number (HCN) such as NB Medicare, other HCN issued out of province, or a federally-administered identifier (Veterans Affairs, RCMP, National Insured Health Benefits, etc.) are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. These clients may be added to the local pharmacy system and synchronized to the NB Client Registry/DIS, leaving the HCN field blank but providing the minimum data set (first name/last name, date of birth, current address with postal code, and phone number). EXCEPTION – Pharmacie Jean Coutu locations must enter the word MISSING or ABSENTE to indicate no HCN and provide the minimum data set.

NOTE: Lot number and expiry date will not be captured in PHIS; however, there must be a mechanism to identify the lot used for each recipient for (AEFI) reporting and/or vaccine recall.

Public Health must also collect data on recipients that are pregnant. Public Health is discussing with pharmacy vendors who may have suggestions for pharmacies to capture this information to provide to Public Health.

Payment for services

Claims for payment are to be submitted as required under the [New Brunswick Prescription Drug Program \(NBPDP\) Plan “I”](#).

For individuals from out-of-province temporarily residing in New Brunswick and who have not been issued an NB Medicare number, enter “999 999 999” in place of the Medicare number.

Resources

Review national guidance for vaccine delivery in the presence of COVID-19: [Infection prevention and control for COVID-19: Interim guidance for acute healthcare settings](#).

The [New Brunswick Immunization Program Guide](#) provides direction to all healthcare practitioners who provide publicly-funded vaccines. It outlines legislation, policies and standards necessary in the provision of safe, effective and competent immunization practice. The guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the Canadian Immunization Guide. Additional information can be found directly from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization.

Visit the GNB [COVID-19 Vaccine](#) webpage to access provincial COVID-19 vaccine resources, including product monographs, clinical practice guidelines for use in special populations, consent forms and vaccine factsheets for clients.

Appendix A – Medical Supplies and PPE Equipment

Assumptions:

* Vaccinations are done sequentially with breaks every 2 hours

* PPE is changed (or removed and disinfected for goggles) every 2 hours for breaks or end of shifts

Supplies and PPE	Items	Requirement per dose (unless otherwise specified)	Notes
Supplies for reconstitution Pfizer	21G needle 1.0 inch NON SAFETY	0.2	
	3 ml syringes (1.8 ml dilution)	0.2	
	Alcohol swab 70% for reconstitution	0.2	
Safety needles for administration	25 G 5/8 inch safety needle	1	* 10% 5/8" (optional, for elderly or child) * 20% 1 1/4" (for obese) * remainder 1"
	25 G 1 inch safety needle		
	23 G 1.25 inch safety needle		
	1 ml syringe (low dead space)		
Syringes for administration	3 ml syringe, where 1ml syringes are unavailable	1	1 ml preferred for Pfizer to get 6 doses per vial; 3 ml to be used when 1 ml unavailable
Supplies for administration	Alcohol swab 70%	2	
	2x2 gauze	1	
	Band-aid	1	
	Sharps container 11.3 L (3 GAL)	1 container per 300 doses	
PPE and sanitizing supplies	Gloves 9" Nitrile (non rated) S	1 box per site, 20% size small	In case of first aid interventions
	Gloves 9" Nitrile (non rated) M	1 box per site, 35% size medium	In case of first aid interventions
	Gloves 9" Nitrile (non rated) L	1 box per site, 35% size large	In case of first aid interventions

	Gloves 9" Nitrile (non rated) XL	1 box per site, 10% size extra large	In case of first aid interventions
	Face shield	2 per 4-hour shift per immunizer	Disposable face shield worn continuously until break or shift end.
	Masks Level 1	2 per 4-hour shift per immunizer + 30% in case client isn't wearing mask	
	Isolation Gown Universal	1 case per site	In case of first aid interventions
	Hand Sanitizer	4 ml	
	Wipes	2	

* Epinephrine will be provided by Public Health and distributed by McKesson. 10 doses have been allotted to each community pharmacy for start-up.

