



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

September 12, 2022

### **Bivalent COVID-19 vaccine rollout to help strengthen Hamilton's protection against anticipated surge of virus**

*Get vaccinated and stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccination, including the doses recommended for you*

**HAMILTON, ON** – With Hamiltonians of all ages spending more time indoors in the coming weeks and months, City of Hamilton Public Health Services, community partners and the Ontario government are rolling out a local bivalent COVID-19 vaccine campaign to ensure doses of the bivalent COVID-19 booster are available to everyone who wants an added layer of protection against an anticipated surge of COVID-19 this fall.

In alignment with direction from the Province, the following populations in Hamilton will be eligible for a bivalent COVID-19 booster dose at a recommended six months (or at a minimum of three months) since their most recent COVID-19 vaccine:

#### **Monday, September 12, 2022 at 8 a.m.**

- **High-risk community members**, including:
  - Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes and Elder Care Lodges and adults living in congregate settings are recommended to receive a fall bivalent booster dose through their regular vaccination channels, such as on-site, local pharmacies or by booking an appointment through Hamilton's online booking tool at [hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine](https://hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine).
  - Individuals who are 70 years of age and older, individuals 12 years of age and over with moderately to severely immunocompromising conditions, First Nations, Inuit or Metis individuals who are 18 years of age and over and their household members 18+, pregnant individuals 18+ and healthcare workers can book an appointment with a local pharmacy or on Hamilton's online booking tool.

#### **Monday, September 26, 2022 at 8 a.m.**

- **Community members aged 18 to 69**, can book an appointment through a local pharmacy, or on Hamilton's online booking tool as of Monday, September 12, 2022 for appointments beginning on **Monday, September 26, 2022**. Appointments can be booked on Hamilton's booking tool 14 days in advance, with new appointment dates being added daily.

All previously-booked booster appointments for September 12 to 25 through Hamilton's online booking tool will be honoured and, if available, the bivalent vaccine will be offered.

The bivalent COVID-19 booster dose offers stronger protection against COVID-19 by targeting the original virus strain and is effective against Omicron subvariants, which are the most common subvariants in Hamilton and across Ontario.

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

Hamilton Public Health Services and its community partners anticipate a surge of demand for the bivalent COVID-19 booster dose with approximately 110,000 high-risk individuals eligible as of September 12, 2022, and over 350,000 Hamiltonians between 18 and 69 years of age eligible on September 26, 2022, and into the fall.

Once eligible to book an appointment for a bivalent COVID-19 booster dose, community members can learn about available locations in Hamilton, hours of operation and how to book at [hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine](https://hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine). Appointments can be booked on Hamilton's booking tool 14 days in advance, with new appointment dates being added daily. Residents are also 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.

The online vaccine booking system, accessed by visiting [hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine](https://hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine) can accept bookings for eligible residents with an Ontario health card (green photo health card OR red and white) and an email address or cell phone number. Individuals without an Ontario health card, or without an email address or cell phone number can call the Public Health Services COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline: 905-974-9848, option 7. Translation services are available by phone.

It is recommended that individuals six months to 12 years of age stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccination, as community members move indoors, students are back in class and the fall respiratory virus season approaches. 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 this age group, visit [hamilton.ca/COVIDvaccines](https://hamilton.ca/COVIDvaccines). Children six months to 12 years of age will be able to walk-in at Hamilton Public Health Services led clinics to receive a monovalent COVID-19 vaccine.

### ***Local settings to receive a bivalent COVID-19 booster dose***

To balance the ongoing priorities of Hamilton Public Health Services to reduce deficits of care brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and a local healthcare system that remains under significant pressure, local capacity for COVID-19 vaccination will remain at a sustainable level in the coming months and supported in the following ways:

- Encouraging community members to tap into the capacity of **local pharmacies** offering COVID-19 vaccines and boosters that will be ramping up.
  - Local pharmacies have administered nearly 50 per cent of COVID-19 vaccine doses in Hamilton over the last six months.
  - Once ramped up in the week to come, it is anticipated that nearly 75 per cent of all COVID-19 vaccines administered locally this upcoming respiratory illness season will be received at local pharmacies;
- Hamilton Public Health Services will continue to operate its **Mountain Vaccine Clinic at LimeRidge Mall** and **mobile vaccine clinics**.
  - Capacity at the Mountain Vaccine Clinic is expected to be 400 to 600 doses per day based on initial supply this week and 1,000 to 1,300 per day with increased supply and additional human health resources.
  - Mobile vaccine clinics are expected to administer up to 100 doses per day, per clinic;
- Continuing to partner with community organizations, such as **DAHC**, to offer COVID-19 vaccine clinics to racialized and Indigenous individuals, and the **Shelter Health Network** to offer COVID-19 vaccines to shelter populations and Residential Care Facilities. Homebound vaccinations will be completed by **Hamilton Paramedic Service** and the **Shelter Health Network**;
- **Winterberry Family Medicine** will continue to operate its primary care led clinic;
- Local **long-term care homes** will administer bivalent vaccines to residents and staff and residents of local **retirement homes** will have access to bivalent booster doses through the **Ontario Ministry of Health's GO-VAXX bus clinics** and **local pharmacies**.

### ***COVID-19 vaccine and booster doses for everyone who wants one***

Based on lessons learned from the local rollout of first, second and booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, Hamilton Public Health Services and its community partners are committed to breaking down barriers and increasing confidence to ensure those most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 can access a COVID-19 vaccine at a convenient location and time, with resources tailored to their needs.

Hamilton Public Health Services will continue to work together with community partners, such as DAHC and the Shelter Health Network, to bring mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinics and community-led clinics to Forward Sortation Areas (FSAs) that have been identified based on analysis of income and racialized individuals residing in these neighbourhoods. Clinic locations and hours of operation will be available at [hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine](https://hamilton.ca/GetYourVaccine).

### **QUICK FACTS**

- As of end of day September 8, 2022, 83.8 per cent of Hamiltonians have received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and 80.6 per cent have completed their primary series by receiving a second dose. 51.9 per cent of Hamiltonians 5+

have received a third dose and 17.4 per cent of those 18+ have received a fourth dose.

- All vaccination planning is based on and contingent on available COVID-19 vaccine supply, and the necessary health and human resources.
- On September 1, 2022, Health Canada [authorized the use of the Moderna bivalent COVID-19 vaccine](#) as a booster dose for individuals aged 18 and over.
- 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](#).

## QUOTE

“As we spend more time indoors in the coming weeks and months, viruses spread more easily, including COVID-19. In anticipation of this fall’s respiratory illness season, Hamilton Public Health Services and its partners are launching a local bivalent COVID-19 vaccine campaign to ensure Hamiltonians can better protect themselves, their loved ones and our community’s healthcare capacity. Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters is the best tool we have as a community to continue the progress we’ve made in managing COVID-19 in the long-term.”

– Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, Medical Officer of Health

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus](http://www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus)
- <https://kidshealthfirst.ca/>
- Public Health Services’ COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline: 905-974-9848, option 7 or [phscovidvaccine@hamilton.ca](mailto:phscovidvaccine@hamilton.ca)
- Public Health Services’ COVID-19 Hotline: 905-974-9848 or [phscovid19@hamilton.ca](mailto:phscovid19@hamilton.ca)

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