

Update on fall booster COVID-19 XBB vaccine

It is anticipated that the updated COVID-19 XBB vaccine formulations will be available in the coming weeks. Individuals should consider delaying their COVID-19 booster dose until the XBB vaccine becomes available.

- This updated vaccine will help maintain protection against severe outcomes from the COVID-19 virus, including the currently circulating XBB variants.
- Specific recommendations for the updated COVID-19 XBB vaccine will be available in the coming weeks and will be posted at www.alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine when available.
- Eligible Albertans may choose to receive a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine booster dose at this time; however, this may mean delay in the receipt of the updated XBB vaccine to later in the fall or winter 2024.
 - A bivalent booster dose prior to the fall **may be appropriate for certain individuals** based on their unique health status and personal situation. Therefore, bivalent booster doses **should not be denied** if your client is eligible as per Alberta Health policy.
- Currently, there is **no non-mRNA vaccine available** to Albertans who cannot receive or who refuse an mRNA vaccine.

Questions and answers:

Why is delaying the COVID-19 booster dose until the fall recommended?

- The current bivalent COVID-19 booster doses were developed to provide optimal immunity against the predominant COVID-19 variants circulating in previous flu seasons.
- This updated vaccine will help maintain protection against severe outcomes from the most recent COVID-19 variants. It has also been demonstrated to provide better protection against the currently circulating COVID-19 XBB variants when compared to the current bivalent vaccines.
- A client's ability to receive an updated COVID-19 XBB vaccine dose in the fall may be impacted if they choose to receive a bivalent booster dose now.

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area)

403-294-4041 (Calgary and area)

1-800-361-9632 (toll free)

FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area)

FAX 1-877-305-9911 (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

Visit ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php

