

## Pfizer/BioNTech Comirnaty XBB.1.5 COVID-19 Vaccine

Health Canada approved the Pfizer/BioNTech Comirnaty XBB.1.5 vaccine September 28, 2023.

A limited supply of the 12 years of age and older formulation will be available to order starting the week of October 16, 2023. The Moderna Spikevax XBB.1.5 will be the predominate supply in Alberta.

Due to the complex nature of the Pfizer formulations, (i.e., different formulation for different age groups) and with NACI removing the “preferential recommendation” of the Pfizer product in the 12- to 29-year-old immunocompetent population, Alberta has brought in limited supply of the Pfizer/BioNTech Comirnaty XBB.1.5 vaccine.

**It is recommended that the Pfizer XBB.1.5 formulation be considered primarily for individuals 12 to 29 years of age who are immunocompromised and starting a vaccine series.**

Pharmacies can immunize Albertans 12 years of age and older with the Pfizer/BioNTech Comirnaty XBB.1.5 COVID-19 starting **October 16, 2023**. For most individuals, the XBB.1.5 COVID-19 XBB.1.5 vaccine can be administered at least 3 months after the last dose, and it is recommended to wait 3 months from a **positive** COVID-19 test. The XBB.1.5 COVID-19 vaccine is expected to trigger a better immune response against currently circulating strains compared to earlier formulations.

The administration of the COVID-19 vaccines is aligned to coincide with the Influenza Immunization Program, which supports co-administration of these vaccines where appropriate. As previously communicated, the general public can begin to receive XBB.1.5 COVID-19 and influenza vaccines on October 16, 2023.

### Key messages for Albertans requesting the Pfizer/BioNTech Comirnaty XBB.1.5 vaccine:

- Alberta’s government now treats COVID-19 as endemic. Therefore, the province will be sourcing and offering COVID-19 vaccines using similar practices as we do for our other provincially funded immunization program.
- COVID-19 vaccines can be used interchangeably.
- All approved vaccines are continually monitored, and post-market surveillance of safety and effectiveness is also conducted.
- We encourage Albertans to get immunized against COVID-19 with every dose they are eligible for, regardless of the vaccine manufacturer. Getting immunized is one of the most important things you can do to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community.

## CLINICAL UPDATES PFIZER/BIONTECH COMIRNATY XBB.1.5 COVID-19 VACCINE

### Vaccine dosage for Pfizer/BioNTech Comirnaty XBB.1.5 COVID-19 vaccine

Please note the Comirnaty XBB.1.5 vaccine does not require dilution.

Age group	Dosage
12 years of age and older	0.3 mL (30 mcg)

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# PHARMACY BENEFACT

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## Vaccine administration schedule

Please review the updated biological page for the Pfizer/BioNTech Comirnaty XBB.1.5 COVID-19 vaccine found here: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/58d31634-61d9-469d-b95f-f714719b923e/resource/7621c6d8-e7a8-447b-9796-444d5953f9f7/download/aip-bp-covid-19-pfizer-xbb15.pdf>

## How do I order the Pfizer XBB.1.5 vaccine

Product will be arriving in the province over the next few weeks beginning the week of October 16. Please contact your pharmacy wholesale distributor for updated ordering and availability timelines.

## Vaccine storage and handling

For updated storage and handling guidelines for the COVID-19 vaccine, please refer to Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling for COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/alberta-vaccine-storage-and-handling-for-covid-19-vaccine>.

**Important note:** the Pfizer/BioNTech Comirnaty XBB.1.5 COVID-19 Vaccine is stable at refrigerator temperatures (2–8°C) for only **10 weeks**. **Please order judiciously to avoid excessive wastage of vaccine from over-ordering.**

Closely monitor the date and time the vaccine was removed from frozen storage, especially for the initial vaccine distributed for the program start date. Once punctured, the vaccine must be use within 12 hours.

## COVID-19 vaccine PINS for billing through Alberta Blue Cross®

Manufacturer	Product	Descriptor	PIN
Pfizer/BioNTech	Comirnaty XBB.1.5 6 doses/vial	Routine Recommended Immunization	09090050
		Other Risk	09090066
		LTC/DSL Resident	09090022

## Removal and wastage of Bivalent COVID-19 vaccine

- **As of October 2, 2023, all Bivalent COVID-19 vaccine should have been removed from your refrigerator** for appropriate destruction by your pharmacy's standard of practice (Standard 5.13). If you are still holding Bivalent inventory, please remove and discard **immediately. Only the XBB.1.5 COVID-19 vaccines will be used going forward.**
- All bivalent COVID-19 vaccine must be accounted for and reconciled in Alberta's Vaccine Inventory management system (AVI) using:
  - Category Code "Recall"
  - Reason Code "Recall"

Pharmacy wholesalers cannot accept vaccine returns. You are responsible for the proper destruction of unused or expired vaccine. The cost of destruction will not be reimbursed.

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](http://ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php)

