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**FROM:**

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**Key Messages:**

- Throughout October, COVID-19 vaccines targeting the latest Omicron XBB subvariants are being prioritized to high-risk groups.
- A new Peel Health Professionals Portal for primary care providers interested in administering COVID-19 vaccines is now live.
- Health care providers can order and provide Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) on a voluntary basis to their patients.
- Patients must have COVID-19 symptoms and a positive COVID-19 test to receive antiviral treatment.

- Moderna Spikevax® XBB.1.5 authorized September 12, 2023
- Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty® Omicron XBB.1.5 authorized September 28, 2023

The Novavax Nuvaxovid® XBB.1.5 vaccine, which is an adjuvanted recombinant protein vaccine, is currently under review by Health Canada.

The Ministry of Health recommends a dose of the XBB.1.5-containing COVID-19 mRNA vaccine for individuals in the authorized age group (i.e., 6 months and older) who have been previously vaccinated against COVID-19 if it has been 6 months from the last dose or known SARS-CoV-2 infection (whichever is later). To accommodate individual health and personal factors that may put the individual at higher risk, a dose may be administered at a minimum interval of 3 months.

Peel Public Health anticipates it will begin to offer the new vaccine formulation at its clinics to individuals at high risk for COVID-19-related complications in mid to late October (subject to product availability). Appointments are to be booked through the provincial booking system:

<https://www.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>

Further details can be found in the Ministry of Health COVID-19 Vaccination Administration guidance document:

[https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19\\_vaccine\\_administration.pdf](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19_vaccine_administration.pdf)

**NEW: COVID-19 Fall/Winter 2023-2024 Campaign**

Ontario's Fall/Winter 2023-2024 Campaign for COVID-19 vaccination has begun. Throughout October, COVID-19 vaccines are being prioritized for:

- Hospitalized individuals and hospital staff;
- Long-Term Care Home and Elder Care Lodge residents, staff, and caregivers;
- Individuals at high risk for COVID-19-related complications.

Vaccines will be distributed, as they become available, to participating retirement homes, other congregate living settings, pharmacies, primary care providers and other providers.

The latest vaccine provides greater protection against the currently circulating Omicron XBB subvariants and both mRNA vaccines are authorized for individuals ≥6 months of age:

## **NEW: Peel Health Professionals Portal for onboarding and ordering COVID-19 vaccines**

Peel Health has launched a new Peel Health Professionals Portal for primary care providers interested in administering COVID-19 vaccines in their office.

### **Onboarding of New Physician-led clinics**

In support of the upcoming Fall 2023 campaign, co-administration of influenza and COVID-19 vaccines is strongly recommended.

If you would like to begin administering COVID-19 vaccines in your office, the onboarding process can be initiated at: <https://peelregion.my.site.com/health/s/covid-onboarding-form>

Please allow 2-3 business days after completing the form for next steps.

### **EXISTING Physician-led clinics**

You will have received an email from **donotreply@peelregion.ca** to allow you to gain access to your online ordering account and an email from **covid19primarycare@peelregion.ca** with end-user information.

For questions or concerns email: [covid-19primarycare@peelregion.ca](mailto:covid-19primarycare@peelregion.ca)

## **NEW: Distribution of rapid antigen tests**

To support ongoing access to COVID-19 testing and antiviral treatment through the Fall/Winter 2023-2024 respiratory season, health care providers (HCPs) can order and provide Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) on a voluntary basis to their patients via the Provincial Antigen Screening Program (PASP):

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/get-free-rapid-tests>

Ordering pathways for health care providers who intend to distribute RATs to their patients or employees, will be through the PPE Supply Portal at: <https://www.ppesupply.ontario.ca/signin.html?vid=20201001001>

For assistance in creating an account or accessing an existing account, or for any questions about orders and shipment, please contact: [sco.supplies@supplyontario.ca](mailto:sco.supplies@supplyontario.ca)

As a reminder, RATs should only be used up to their date of expiry. Information on manufacturer published expiry date extensions can be found on the Ontario Health website: <https://www.ontariohealth.ca/providing-health-care/clinical-resources-education/covid-19/health-system-response-resources>

Eligible populations continue to have access to publicly funded molecular testing for COVID-19. Community based PCR testing is being offered through testing programs in clinical assessment centres: <https://www.ontario.ca/assessment-centre-locations/>

The Region of Peel is distributing free RATs to the public, Monday to Friday between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, at Access Peel counters located at:

- 7120 Hurontario Street, Mississauga
- 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite B, Brampton

They will also soon be available at Peel Public Health clinics (day and times may vary) located at:

- Fairview Clinic (325 Central Pkwy W, Unit 21, Mississauga)
- Meadowvale Clinic (6975 Meadowvale Town Centre Circle, Unit 3, Mississauga)

## **REMINDER: COVID-19 testing and antiviral treatment**

Patients must have COVID-19 symptoms and a positive COVID-19 test to receive antiviral treatment (e.g., paxlovid).

A positive result on any of the following test types are sufficient to confirm COVID-19:

- A RAT administered by either the patient (at home) or a health care provider.
  - **Note:** a negative RAT is not sufficient to rule out a COVID-19 infection. Patients at high risk with a negative rapid antigen test should be considered for confirmatory PCR test.
- ID NOW or other rapid molecular test.
- A lab-based PCR test.

Patients at high risk of severe outcomes of COVID-19 are eligible for PCR or rapid molecular testing at participating pharmacies, hospitals, assessment centres, and select primary care settings. Visit the COVID-19 testing locations website to identify local testing sites: <https://www.ontario.ca/assessment-centre-locations/>

Authorized providers may order publicly funded PCR testing for eligible patients using the Public Health Ontario COVID-19 and Respiratory Virus Test Requisition form:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/laboratory-services/test-information-index/covid-19>

Additional resources and clinical guidance for COVID-19 treatments are available from Ontario Health: <https://www.ontariohealth.ca/providing-health-care/clinical-resources-education/covid-19/treatment>