



# Avoiding COVID-19 Vaccine Wastage

Last Update: January 2022

<i>mRNA Vaccine</i>	<i>Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine (100 µg)</i>	<i>Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine (30 µg)</i>	<i>Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine (10 µg, pediatric)</i>
<b>Storage temperature post-thaw</b>	2°C to 8°C	2°C to 8°C	2°C to 8°C
<b>Viability in fridge post-thaw</b>	30 days	31 days	10 weeks
<b>Viability post-puncture/dilution</b>	24 hours after first puncture	6 hours after reconstitution	12 hours after reconstitution
<b>Injection technique</b>	Intramuscular	Intramuscular	Intramuscular
<b>NACI/Ministry recommended dose interval*</b>	2 doses, 8 weeks apart	2 doses, 8 weeks apart	2 doses, 8 weeks apart
<b>Number of dose/ vial</b>	10	6	10
<b>Date on Vial</b>	Expiration Date**	Expiration Date**	Manufacture Date

\*For information about third doses: Ministry of Health [COVID-19 Vaccine Third Dose Recommendations](#) and [COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) With informed consent, [product monograph vaccine intervals may be followed](#).

\*\* Expiration Dates may be granted extension by Health Canada as necessary

## Planning

- Order vaccine for a 1-2 week supply only. Finish old stock before new.
- Avoid light exposure and shaking of vaccines.
- Label vials with thaw/puncture/reconstitution times and dates so it is clear when to discard.
- Confirm the shipment of your vaccines before you book patients for your clinic.
- Confirm the attendance of pre-booked patients prior to appointment time.
- Have a waitlist of patients to call for vaccination in case of "no-shows" to avoid wastage of pre-drawn syringes.
- Take every opportunity to vaccinate, especially for those who may be vaccine hesitant and for those who may be less likely to return for their vaccine, either first, second, third/booster doses.

## When Immunizing

- Puncture vials and draw up vaccines as close to administration as possible, only with the number of doses required to meet expected demand. Pre-loading syringes with vaccine is generally discouraged. However, pre-loading syringes may be an acceptable practice to support the efficient operation of large vaccine clinics.
- For the Pfizer-BioNTech (10µg) pediatric formulation, the province has received just enough vaccine doses for the number of eligible children so make every effort to minimize wastage.
- For the adult COVID-19 vaccine formulations (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), opening a vial to vaccinate a small number of individuals may be necessary and is acceptable; especially where a vial is reaching its "must use by" date.

## Storage and Handling

- If fridge or temperature monitoring device breaks down, immediately report the incident to Toronto Public Health, maintain cold chain, and refer to the [Ministry's Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidance](#).
- Do NOT receive new shipments if fridge/cooling devices are not working.



## COVID-19 Vaccines Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD & Janssen

### Documenting

- If you have unused vaccine that is expired or expiring soon, document all wasted doses in COVaxON, dispose of all vials in medical sharps waste containers or according to your workplace's policy for medical waste disposal, and be sure to destroy all labels and packaging.

### Expiration Date Extension for Some COVID-19 Vaccines

- Pfizer-BioNTech (Adult/Adolescent Formulation) COVID-19 vaccine with expiration dates originally labeled as August 2021 to February 2022 have been granted an extension by 3 months.
  - Therefore if you receive vaccines with expiry dates August 2021 to February 2022 on the label, extend it by 3 months to get the new expiration date.
- Moderna COVID-19 vaccines have been granted an extension on their expiry dates by 2 months, with the exception of one lot (vaccine lots expiring November 10, 2021, i.e. 052C21A).
  - Therefore if you receive Moderna COVID-19 vaccines (with the exception of vials expiring November 10, 2021), extend the expiry date on the label by 2 months to get the new expiration date.
- No matter the expiration date on the label, sites should focus on using all doses within the vaccines' post-thaw viability period.
  - Discard all COVID-19 vaccines that are unused within their post-thaw viability period, regardless of the expiration date on the vial.

### Questions?

- Health Care Providers can send questions to [COVIDVaccineOrder@toronto.ca](mailto:COVIDVaccineOrder@toronto.ca).
- Long-Term Care/Retirement Homes/other eligible Congregate Settings can send questions to [LTCRVaccine@toronto.ca](mailto:LTCRVaccine@toronto.ca).