

InfoSheet: COVID-19 vaccine interchangeability

June 24, 2021

- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) and BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC) recommends that the vaccine series be completed with the same COVID-19 vaccine product.
- The practice of vaccine interchangeability has been used in immunizations for many years and with many types of vaccines. It is always best to complete a series with the same product, however, interchangeability can occur when the same product is unknown or unavailable. Canadian Immunization Guide (CIG) outlines general principles for vaccine interchangeability. According to CIG, to be considered interchangeable, the vaccines should:
 - Be authorized with the same indications and with equally acceptable schedules, and
 - Be authorized for the same population, and
 - Contain comparable type and quantity of antigen, and
 - Be similar in terms of safety, reactogenicity, immunogenicity and efficacy
- The mRNA vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna, have similarities, and meet the criteria above and are equally safe and effective.

On June 24, 2021, it was announced that BC's vaccine supply is changing with lower shipments of Pfizer and increased shipments of Moderna. This will impact vaccine administration:

- With this shift in supply, people who received Pfizer for their first dose will more than likely be offered Moderna for their second dose.
- For clients who received Pfizer for dose 1, they do have the option of cancelling and rebooking to try obtaining Pfizer at a later date, but there is no assurance that Pfizer will be available and based on what we now know about the supply of mRNA vaccine coming in, it will likely be Moderna.
- Clients who received AZ as Dose 1 can be booked to receive mRNA vaccine for Dose 2. Either Pfizer or Moderna is effective and recommended as a second dose, whichever is readily available at the clinic.
- It's better for clients to receive their second dose when it is available, with a product that is available, than to wait for the same vaccine product; 2 doses, either with same product or with interchanged product provides full protection.

*Pfizer remains the only approved COVID-19 vaccine for ages 12-17 years.