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## PRACTICE UPDATE for COVID-19 mRNA and viral vector vaccine interchangeability

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Date:	June 24, 2021
To:	Physicians and nurse practitioners
Topic:	PRACTICE UPDATE for COVID-19 mRNA and viral vector vaccine interchangeability
Purpose:	Guidance on interchangeability of COVID-19 vaccines
Prepared by:	Northern Health COVID-19 Clinical Immunization Working Group

### **Situation:**

On June 1, the National Advisory Council on Immunization rendered a decision which, based on the summary of evidence from trials in Europe, allows for interchangeability between mRNA type (Pfizer, Moderna) and viral vector (AstraZeneca (AZ)/COVISHIELD) COVID-19 vaccines. mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are also interchangeable.

Interchangeability of COVID-19 vaccine products is evidence-informed and aligns with the BCCDC guidance and current practice standards. **It is not considered a medication/vaccine administration error.** When this situation occurs, the immunizer uses the [InfoSheet: COVID-19 vaccine interchangeability](#) and the [Interchangeability Process: COVID-19 vaccine documents for guidance and procedure](#).

Please refer to the [BCCDC Immunization Manual Part 4: Biological Products](#) for the latest guidelines on COVID-19 vaccine administration.

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

### **Update:**

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.
- Moderna and Pfizer are made with the same research and technology, are both mRNA types, and are equally safe and effective.
- 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.