

Changing the Way We Work

September 6, 2024: Preparing for Fall & Practice Management

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When will healthcare workers be eligible for the mpox vaccine?

The mpox vaccine is not recommended for healthcare workers. Universal/ standard contact precautions offer adequate protection, and we have not seen mpox cases in healthcare providers who have provided routine care to people with mpox. Clade I is more severe than the clade II mpox we have been seeing, but thus far there has only one been case reported of that clade outside of Africa. To-date, there have been no cases of Clade I in Canada.

Is the mpox vaccine less effective against the new mpox clade?

We do not have enough data on the degree of protection offered by the Imvamune (MVA-BN) vaccine against clade I (the "new" clade) which is circulating in Africa. The case fatality rate with clade I is somewhat higher at 3-6 per cent based on data from Central Africa. Thus far, this clade has not been seen in Canada.

Currently, who should continue to test/be tested for COVID-19?

Only patients who would benefit from treatment should be tested. For others, they should be staying home if they are sick, regardless of whether they have COVID-19, flu, RSV, or any other respiratory illness.

Paxlovid is very difficult to obtain. Will that change in the fall?

Paxlovid access should be getting better in the fall, as pharmacies stock up on respiratory season products as we get into the respiratory season. As a reminder, Paxlovid has been listed on the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) formulary for ODB-eligible patients and is also available for patients with private insurance or who pay out-of-pocket. If a pharmacy doesn't have on hand, they can order it from their wholesaler and receive it the next business day. The Ontario College of Pharmacists has advised that pharmacists have an ethical obligation to ensure continuity of patient care and if their pharmacy doesn't have Paxlovid in stock, they will help patients find a pharmacy that does.

I have several senior patients who would like to boost their COVID-19 immunity prior to travelling before the new vaccine is available. Should we be vaccinating with XBB version before travel, if they can't get the new vaccine?

I would not recommend it. Receiving the XBB vaccine now means delaying the new KP2 vaccine by at least three months, which is likely to be much more effective. I would recommend using other measures, including masking to reduce their risk. If they received a vaccine during the spring vaccine campaign then they would still have good protection.

These additional questions and comments were answered live during the session. To view responses, please refer to the session recording.

- Where can a patient in downtown Toronto receive a free mpox vaccine?
- Can the RSV vaccine be given at the same time as Prevnar 20?
- What are the long-term consequences of mpox infection?
- Can you use the same viral swab to test for mpox/HSV/varicella on a lesion or should a separate second swab be submitted for an mpox lesion?
- To swab for mpox, should we unroof lesions?
- Is mpox now prevalent in the heterosexual community too?
- Can mpox be transmitted by air? What PPE would you recommend?
- Can the mpox vaccine be administered after infection?
- How long does the mpox vaccine remain effective? Will patients eventually need another dose?
- Masking in hospitals is becoming rare, even in areas such as oncology. Will the ministry mandate the use of masks again, given the number of hospitalizations for COVID-19 this year?
- Is it true that Canada will no longer have access to Novavax? If so, where do we direct our advocacy to make Novavax available?
- Will RATs become available for respiratory illness assessment in the ED? Especially for patients who are eligible for antivirals.
- A senior with COVID-19 was told that Paxlovid is no longer being administered. Has that changed, and why?
- RATs are no longer available in our EDs, resulting in an antibiotic stewardship problem and clinical challenges in terms of treatment for people who would benefit from metformin and Paxlovid. Can you confirm the plan for hospitals in Ontario to be able to respond to the current COVID-19 surge?
- When will the updated COVID-19 vaccine be available?
- Given the lack of testing, how accurate are the COVID-19 statistics?

- Is there any hope that there will be a combined vaccine for influenza and COVID-19?
- How do we access the RSV vaccine? I tried to order it for a homeless elderly patient and it's not an option.
- Are retirement homes going to be responsible for administering the RSV vaccine?
- If someone wants to pay privately for the RSV vaccine, which one should they buy? Does one offer better protection over the other?
- How do we prepare the RSV vaccine for infants?
- Will Abrysvo be covered by OHIP, if the pregnant individual wants it instead of having their newborn receive Beyfortus?
- Will midwives be authorized to administer Beyfortus? Infants delivered by midwives, especially at home, often their family doctor or nurse practitioner until they are two months old.
- If a patient receives Abrysvo during pregnancy, is their infant still eligible for Beyfortus?
- Will there be information available for counselling parents on the RSV vaccine? Will it be available in different languages?
- Pevnar 20 has not been delivered to my office, just Pevnar 15. Do we have to put in a special order for it?
- If a patient received Abrysvo while pregnant, will their baby still need Beyfortus?
- For children under 3 months who developed pertussis, have we looked back to see if the parents or family members previously received Adacel?
- If an infant has been hospitalized with RSV, is the vaccine still administered? If so, when?
- Should healthcare workers receive the COVID-19 vaccine this fall?
- What will the communication strategy look like for patients to understand the new vaccine changes (e.g., RSV)? I am concerned that a lot of the onus will fall to family physicians to communicate these changes, and this will add to our workload issues.
- Since the highest risk for pertussis is for infants under 3 months, is it an indication that the vaccine is not effective, or that pregnant individuals are not receiving the vaccination?
- Do you have data on how long the Tdap vaccine is effective? Should a booster be recommended sooner than every 10 years?
- If a patient received Pneumovax 23 at age 65, when can they receive Pevnar 20 for free?
- Is it expected that the RSV program will be expanded to everyone over 60 soon?
- Would you clarify who should receive Pevnar 13 versus Pevnar 20?

- How will RSV vaccines roll out in primary care offices? Will they need to be actively ordered, or will a supply automatically come to each office like the influenza vaccines?
- Why is there a difference between the infant RSV vaccine and the adult one?
- How long has Beyfortus been on the market? I'm thinking about how to discuss vaccine safety/efficacy with parents.