

Calgary Zone

COVID-19 UPDATES



Booster shot eligibility expanded

Alberta expanded eligibility for booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine this week, starting with those aged 60 and older.

Lower age groups – eventually including all adults aged 18 and older – will be added to eligibility criteria as supply allows. The first appointments for a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine will be scheduled starting Monday, December 6.

Albertans who were previously eligible for third doses continue to be able to book their appointments. All health-care workers who provide direct patient care and who received a second dose less than eight weeks after their first dose are eligible for a third dose, at a minimum of a six-month interval from the second dose.

The Alberta Advisory Committee on Immunization (AACI) recommends that all patients aged 18 and over are offered a booster at the six-month interval, and that a strong clinical recommendation is issued for those aged 40 and over, as well as those with a chronic health condition that puts them at a greater risk of a severe health outcome. Read the [clinical bulletin](#).

[More information](#).

Long COVID clinic information

Clinic and referral information is now available for a new Calgary Zone Long COVID clinic that provides wrap-around multi-disciplinary care for patients suffering from severe symptoms at least 12 weeks post-infection.

The Long COVID Inter-Professional Outpatient Program (IPOP), which is a hybrid virtual and in-person clinic, offers medical and rehabilitation services. In-person clinics are located at the Rockyview General Hospital and the Peter Lougheed Centre.

Clinic teams consisting of nurse practitioners and registered nurses develop care plans and consult with specialists. Once patients are stable, they are discharged back to their family physician. Patient eligibility is as follows:

- 18 years or older with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 diagnosis
- Post-COVID symptoms persisting for more than 12 weeks
- Requires complex medical management and/or rehabilitation based on [functional scale](#)

For more information, please reference the updated [Long COVID pathway](#) on [Specialist Link](#).

Patients with single system involvement (for example, cardiac, neurology), should use the usual referral processes to the appropriate specialty. Patients with ongoing respiratory symptoms only should be referred to the clinic for triage and will be transferred to the COVID lung clinics via Pulmonary Central Access and Triage (PCAT).

[Referral forms](#) should be sent to Long COVID Central Access with:

- Reason for referral
- Investigations to date
- Quadrant of city in which patient resides (if in Calgary) to enable triage to north or south locations

[More information](#).

Variant, vaccination on menu at PCN webinar

The Omicron variant and pediatric vaccination headline the hot topics that will be addressed in the next webinar in the PCN COVID-19 and mental health series.

On Monday, December 13, from 6-8 p.m., Dr. Rick Ward and Dr. Christine Luelo will be joined by a panel of experts to discuss the latest COVID-19 science. The online event will also feature an update on Specialist Link tele-advice — including the top 10 things you didn't know about the service, which links family doctors and specialists in real time. [Register](#).

Specialist Link holiday hours

Specialist Link tele-advice will continue to be available to family physicians and nurse practitioners during the holiday season, but some services will have limited availability.

All services will be closed on statutory holidays, as usual, which means tele-advice will not be available on Monday, December 27, Tuesday, December 28 and Monday, January 3.

In addition, the following tele-advice services are also closed as detailed below:

- Anesthesiology: Also closed Wednesday, December 29 to Friday, December 31
- Community pediatrician: Also closed Friday, December 24
- Endocrinology: Also closed Monday, December 20 to Friday, December 31
- OB internal medicine: Also closed Wednesday, December 29 to Friday, December 31
- Obstetrics and gynecology: Also closed Friday, December 24 to Friday, December 31
- Orthopedic surgery: Also closed Wednesday, December 29 to Friday, December 31
- Pediatric and adult otolaryngology: Also closed Monday, December 27 to Monday, January 3

Specialist Link tele-advice, which is available Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (selected services close at 4 p.m.), connects specialists with family doctors in real time. Requesting tele-advice is simple; doctors or their team members can visit specialistlink.ca and click on the relevant button or call **403-910-2551**. Physicians can expect to receive a call-back within one hour.

Quick links

Severe COVID-19 outcomes report

Age, vaccination status and certain conditions have the most impact on whether an individual will get very sick from COVID-19, according to the latest COVID-19 Scientific Advisory Group rapid evidence report. [Read the report.](#)

Lab bulletin: Serology testing

Alberta Precision Laboratories has released an updated lab bulletin on serology testing for COVID-19. The bulletin reaffirms that serology should not be used for diagnosis of acute COVID-19 infection but may be used to determine eligibility for some monoclonal antibody treatments. [More details.](#)

Monoclonal treatment eligibility expanded

Eligibility for Sotrovimab treatment has been expanded to unvaccinated patients aged 55 and older and patients aged 18 and over who are pregnant or with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or obesity. [More details.](#)

COVID Corner

On Wednesday, December 8, from 7-9 p.m., Dr. Janet Reynolds, from Calgary Foothills PCN, will be among the speakers at *Keeping COVID Out: Optimizing Patient Care to Reduce Hospitalizations*. [More details.](#)