

COVID-19 UPDATES

COVID-19 guidance for community clinics

With further COVID-19 measures due to be lifted in Alberta next week, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) has developed a [guidance document](#) to support community clinics.

The document references masking, personal protective equipment, point-of-care risk assessments and administrative controls. Indoor masking requirements and other measures are due to be removed on Tuesday, March 1 as part of Step 2 of [Alberta's reopening plan](#).

The CPSA also put together an [FAQ](#) to address existing hot topics such as the two items below:

- Requiring patients to wear masks in clinics: “While you can request that children wear masks within a medical clinic, you cannot deny care if they refuse, or their guardian refuses on their behalf. For children who cannot or will not wear masks, clinics may offer virtual appointments, or dedicate a specific time of day and exam room for in-person assessments.”
- Clinic protocols: “Clinic managers and employers can ask their staff to continue wearing masks and any other necessary PPE while working within the clinic. While physicians cannot deny care to a patient who refuses to wear a mask, you may use your judgment and experience to determine if the patient may be treated safely in another way.”

When Alberta enters Step 2, the guidance document and FAQ will be updated to reference adults – in addition to children – no longer being required to wear masks indoors.

Alberta Health Services has updated its [guidance document](#) for community providers. There is also an updated [testing and screening document](#) for long-term care, designated supportive living and hospice settings.

Pediatric vaccines

Some community clinics will begin offering pediatric vaccines next week as part of a plan to increase options for families with children aged five to 11.

Starting Wednesday, March 2, clinics currently offering COVID-19 vaccinations that have expressed interest in vaccinating children will receive doses that can be offered to clinic patients. More information will be released shortly about how clinics not enrolled in the program can participate. [More information](#).

In addition, selected AHS clinics will begin offering extended hours for pediatric vaccination, while pharmacies with extended hours and with experience vaccinating children will also be able to offer the vaccine. [Pediatric vaccine biological information](#).

- [AHS clinics: Book online](#)
- [Participating pharmacies](#)

From Wednesday, March 2 until Wednesday, March 16, AHS vaccination clinics will offer extended hours (3-8 p.m. on weekdays and noon to 6 p.m. on weekends).

Please note: Walk-in appointments for pediatric vaccination are available in some communities outside Calgary. At the time of writing, they are not available in the Calgary Zone. Walk-in information can be [found here](#).

[More details](#).

Plant-based vaccine approved: Health Canada approved Medicigo's COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday, February 24. [More details](#).

Family Medicine Summit

A reminder that the 67th Family Medicine Summit, hosted by the Alberta College of Family Physicians, takes place from Friday, March 4 to Sunday, March 6. The virtual event includes presentations about COVID-19.

[More details](#).

Quick links

COVID Corner returns

On Thursday, March 24, from 7-9 p.m., COVID Corner returns with *Reflections After Two Years on the COVID Rollercoaster*. [More information](#).

Pediatric COVID-19 immune response

The Wall Street Journal recently published a report suggesting why children tend to fare better with COVID-19. [Read it](#).

GI webinars

The University of Calgary is hosting a series of Continuing Medical Education events on managing gastrointestinal and liver issues in the medical home. The series discusses common digestive health conditions and looks at how pathways (including those on [Specialist Link](#)) can support effective management. [More information](#).

Reminder: COVID-19 webinar

On Tuesday, March 1, at 10 a.m., the College of Family Physicians of Canada hosts *Treatment Options for COVID-19 in the Community: What Family Docs Need to Know*. [Register](#).