

COVID-19 UPDATES

Second-dose appointments open

Alberta unveiled its strategy for [second-dose appointments](#) earlier this week, which is based on a three-phase rollout for anyone who has already received their first dose.

- Anyone vaccinated in March or earlier can now book their second dose [online](#), by calling 811, or via participating family physician offices or pharmacies
- Anyone vaccinated in April can book their second dose starting Monday, June 14
- Anyone vaccinated in May can book their second dose starting Monday, June 28

The interval between first and second doses still starts at 12 weeks, but second-dose appointments will be available at progressively earlier intervals, if supply remains stable.

- For Pfizer and Moderna, the interval will be lowered to a minimum of three to four weeks
- For AstraZeneca, it will be lowered to a minimum recommended length of eight weeks

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization [released a report](#) earlier this week on the interchangeability of approved vaccines.

Albertans who received an AstraZeneca first dose in March or earlier can book second-dose appointments now. Those who received it in April or May should wait until eight weeks have passed. Anyone who received a first dose of AstraZeneca will have a choice of:

- Booking a second appointment for AstraZeneca [online](#), by calling 811 or via [participating pharmacies](#)
- Booking a second dose of an mRNA vaccine

[More information.](#)

Drop-in immunization available this weekend

A hockey rink in northeast Calgary is offering drop-in immunizations this weekend as part of efforts to offer Albertans more options for receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

No appointments are necessary for Albertans born in 2009 or earlier who want to receive a first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at Village Square Leisure Centre, 2623 56 Street NE, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday, June 5 and Sunday, June 6. Organizers hope to vaccinate up to 5,000 residents of northeast and southeast Calgary over two days. Second doses are not available.

The initiative is a partnership between the Calgary East Newcomers Collaborative, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, community family physicians, Primary Care Networks (including Mosaic PCN), Alberta Health Services, the City of Calgary, the University of Calgary and the Alberta Government.

“There’s a certain percentage of the population who have difficulty accessing the existing vaccination clinics, whether there’s a language barrier, digital literacy challenges or because they are working three jobs and are too busy to attend an appointment,” said Dr. Annalee Coakley, of Mosaic PCN, who is medical lead for the clinic. “This walk-in clinic will meet people’s needs by offering extended hours and vaccination on a first-come, first-served basis.”

The community-led drop-in clinic aims to provide education and address vaccine questions, as well as walk-in first-dose immunizations. Materials have been printed in more than 70 languages. Mosaic PCN physicians, health team members and staff are among those helping to run the clinic.

[More details.](#)

Variants of concern testing resumes

Alberta will resume testing all confirmed COVID-19 cases for variants of concern this week.

Selective screening was introduced on May 1 due to limited lab capacity. Testing has now resumed for variants of concern including B.1.617, the variant first identified in India.

The B.1.1.7 variant is the dominant strain in Alberta.

[More details.](#)

Next stage of reopening plan set for June 10

Alberta moved to Stage 1 of its reopening plan on Tuesday, June 1, with Stage 2 expected to begin on Thursday, June 10, provided hospitalizations remain below 500.

The province’s [three-stage plan](#) to remove COVID-19 health restrictions is based on vaccine and hospitalization targets.

Stage 2 changes are set to include:

- Outdoor social gatherings for up to 20 people, with distancing
- Indoor and outdoor dining (up to six people, no longer restricted to households only)

- Gyms and other indoor fitness for solo and drop-in activities, fitness classes, with three-metre distancing
- Indoor and outdoor youth and adult sports, with no restrictions
- Public outdoor gatherings increase to 150 people
- Distancing and masking requirements remain in effect

Stage 2 and Stage 3 thresholds:

- Stage 2: Two weeks after 60 per cent of eligible Albertans have received at least one dose and hospitalizations are below 500 and declining.
- Stage 3: Two weeks after 70 per cent of eligible Albertans have received at least one dose.

A stage may be paused to respond to transmission trends at the regional or provincial level.

Calgary Zone webinar: Register

On Monday, June 7, from 6-8 p.m., the next Calgary Zone webinar in the series returns with a special focus on mental health.

Hosted by Dr. Rick Ward and Dr. Christine Luelo, it will feature segments on:

- Transgender health
- Dialectical behavioural therapy
- Insomnia
- COVID-19 second doses and other family practice hot topics

[Register](#)

HQCA panel reports to include vaccination status

Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) panel reports are set to include information on COVID-19 vaccinations.

PCN physician leads, the Section of Family Medicine and Section of Rural Medicine worked in partnership with HQCA to address a need identified by family physicians to more effectively identify which of their patients has received a vaccine, by age and chronic conditions, and whether a patient is partially or fully vaccinated. The change allows physicians to reach out to patients and address barriers to vaccine uptake.

With the support of Alberta Health, HQCA will receive data weekly to provide physicians near real-time updates on the vaccination status of their patients and information on the vaccination progress of their panel.

Family physicians can use this list to follow up with patients in several ways, including:

- Contacting patients as a group via secure message or email
- Reaching out to patients individually, possibly starting with the oldest (virtual and in-person visits responding to vaccine hesitancy are billable)

- Cross-referencing the list with upcoming appointments
- Monitoring vaccination rates of your panel to determine timing and impact of vaccination efforts.

Family physicians who have signed up for HQCA's panel reports will be notified via email as soon as the data is available. Physicians who want to sign up should visit request.hqca.ca. Delegate access can be given to team members such as a panel manager, practice facilitator, quality improvement facilitators or clinic manager who can assist you in actioning the report. Contact your PCN for more information.

Quick links

COVID-19 clinical questions

Physicians can reach a Communicable Disease Control unit lead or an assistant head nurse for clinical questions (including isolation or quarantine information for patients) via email (cdccovid@ahs.ca) or phone (1-888-522-1919). The phone line is available seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

COVID Corner

On Wednesday, June 9, at 7 p.m., the U of C COVID Corner's next two-hour webinar is *Management of Acute COVID-19 in the Hospital and Long COVID in the Community*. [Register](#).

COVID Talks for Docs

On Wednesday, June 9, at noon, the AMA is hosting the eighth one-hour webinar in the COVID Talks for Docs series that responds to questions from primary care. The webinar's subject is COVID-19 evidence review. [Register](#).