

Calgary Zone

COVID-19 UPDATES



Paxlovid in primary care: Expressions of interest

The prescribing of Paxlovid for COVID-19 patients at high risk of severe outcomes is set to transition to primary care in the coming months.

Calgary and area Primary Care Networks would like to hear from physicians and clinics interested in learning more about prescribing in family practice.

The number of patients eligible for Paxlovid remains small, but a coordinated plan for testing and prescribing in the community is needed to support patients, medical homes and the system as a whole.

Information, tools and resources for primary care providers related to Paxlovid prescribing are in development and will be shared as soon as they are available.

To help gauge the level of interest in clinic-based prescribing, please email info@calgaryareapcns.ca to express interest in learning more. We will then follow up with more information. Expressing interest in learning more does not commit any clinic or physician to participating in any subsequent program. Prescribing models may vary from PCN to PCN or area to area due to local variance and need.

Outpatient treatment for COVID-19 patients at high risk of severe outcomes is currently available through Alberta Health Services. Paxlovid is taken orally in pill form; one dose is a combination of three tablets, taken twice daily for five days. Patients who have a lab-confirmed COVID-19 infection and can receive the treatment within five days of symptom onset are eligible if they are:

- Unvaccinated or have received one dose of vaccine and are:
 - Age 55 and older
 - Age 18 and older with a pre-existing health condition
 - Pregnant
- Immunocompromised

More information is available via [AHS](#) and a [patient FAQ](#).

Email: [Expression of Interest: Paxlovid prescribing](#)

Third doses, pop-up clinics

Effective Monday, March 14, appointments for a third dose of COVID-19 can be booked for youth aged 12 to 17, provided five months have passed since their second dose.

Third doses have been shown to offer better protection against the Omicron variant. Youth under 18 need permission from a parent or guardian to be vaccinated. Parents or guardians need to attend appointments or provide a signed consent form. Identification that shows a date of birth is required for all vaccinations.

Appointments can be booked through the [Alberta Vaccine Booking](#) system.

Temporary clinics offering COVID-19 vaccines for adults, youth and children – as well as influenza and pneumonia – will also be open the next two weekends in northeast Calgary. The pop-ups will be hosted at the Genesis Centre on Saturday, March 12 (noon to 7 p.m., 10 – 7555 Falconridge Blvd. NE) and Village Square Leisure Centre on Saturday, March 19 (10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., 2623 – 56 Street NE). Translators and other support will be available.

The pop-up clinics are being opened in addition to walk-in clinics for children aged five and older, which are available in Calgary and several surrounding communities. [Click here](#) for a complete list of the walk-in clinic locations and opening hours.

Masking guidance

Many community clinics are continuing to ask patients to wear a mask for in-person appointments or adopting strategies to reduce the risk of infection following the lifting of provincial indoor masking requirements.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) released [updated guidance](#) last week confirming patients cannot be refused service or treatment if they cannot, or will not, wear a mask. However, strategies such as setting aside appointment times or exam rooms for those who choose not to wear a mask – or asking them to avoid the waiting room – are being employed in many clinics throughout the Calgary area.

The CPSA has produced a [poster for clinics](#) to display in their waiting room that encourages patients to wear a mask. PPE guidance for AHS facilities, including continuing care, remains unchanged. The [community clinic guidance document](#) has been updated.

Quick links

COVID-19 pathway updates

The [adult](#) and [pediatric](#) COVID-19 pathways have been updated to reflect changes in isolation procedures. More Specialist Link pathways.

Family Medicine Summit video

Physicians who missed the *Living with COVID* session at the recent Family Medicine Summit can now [watch a video](#) of the talk. [Slides](#).

AHS immunization policy

At the direction of Alberta Health, AHS updated has updated its policies related to the immunization status of workers. Please reference the [Staff FAQ](#) for more details.

COVID Corner

PCN physician Dr. Christine Luelo will be among the guest speakers for the return of the COVID Corner series. On Wednesday, March 23, from 7-9 p.m., Dr. Luelo will be part of the panel for *Reflections After Two Years on the COVID Rollercoaster*. [More information](#).