

# COVID-19 UPDATES

## Third-dose eligibility, influenza

Eligibility for third doses of COVID-19 vaccine has opened up to include Albertans aged 75 and older and First Nations, Inuit and Métis people aged 65 and older. Appointments can be booked at least six months after the second dose was administered.

The list of those eligible for a third dose also includes the following:

- Residents of supportive living and congregate care facilities
- Immunocompromised Albertans
- Those travelling to a jurisdiction that does not accept visitors vaccinated with Covishield/AstraZeneca or mixed doses (mRNA vaccine)

Third-dose eligibility was expanded, effective Wednesday, October 6, following recommendations from the Alberta Advisory Committee on Immunization. [More details](#).

Alberta's influenza campaign is due to get underway on Monday, October 18. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) released [new recommendations](#) last month indicating that COVID-19 vaccines can now be co-administered with or given before or after other vaccines with no minimum spacing. Read the [letter to physicians](#).

---

## Community clinic COVID-19 vaccination

The Alberta Vaccine Booking System, which allows patients to book COVID-19 vaccination [appointments online](#), is expanding to include community physician offices.

The portal, which currently includes Alberta Health Services clinics and pharmacies, is being updated to incorporate the addition of community clinics. Timelines have not yet been confirmed. During the transition, clinics will continue to have the option of being listed as a vaccinating clinic on [Alberta Find a Doctor](#), via that website's [search tool](#), which directs patients to contact clinics directly to enquire about appointments.

The Alberta Medical Association's Back the Vax team will support physicians during the transition. Questions can be directed to [backthevax@albertadoctors.org](mailto:backthevax@albertadoctors.org). Clinics that need to be added or removed from the list of vaccinating clinics at Alberta Find a Doctor can contact their PCN or email [info@calgaryareapcns.ca](mailto:info@calgaryareapcns.ca).

---

## School outbreaks, public health restrictions

Reporting of COVID-19 cases and outbreaks in schools has resumed, effective Wednesday, October 6. The change means there will be public reporting when schools have at least two COVID-19 cases, while outbreaks will be declared when 10 or more COVID-19 cases are reported within a 14-day period.

Effective Tuesday, October 12, parents will be informed if their child may have been exposed to a case that was infectious while at school. School authorities have also been asked to develop processes for contact notification. AHS is expected to take the lead on contact notification in schools in the coming weeks. Rapid testing will also be made available in kindergarten to Grade 6 schools.

Effective Wednesday, October 6, additional public health measures were introduced to set limits on gatherings, as follows:

- Vaccinated Albertans: Indoor private social gatherings are limited to two households, up to a maximum of 10 vaccine-eligible, vaccinated people. There are no restrictions on children under 12
- Unvaccinated Albertans: Indoor social gatherings are not permitted
- The restrictions do not apply to support groups or workers accessing homes to provide care, home repairs and maintenance
- Outdoor private social gatherings are limited to 20 people, with social distancing between households

[More details.](#)

---

## Reminder: PCN webinar

Family physicians in the Calgary area will share their thoughts on the impact of the fourth wave at the next webinar in the popular Calgary Zone PCN series.

On Monday, October 18, from 6-8 p.m., co-hosts Dr. Rick Ward and Dr. Christine Luelo will lead a panel discussion on the challenges facing family practice. The two-hour session will also include segments on pediatric vaccination and the latest COVID-19 science, with Dr. Jim Kellner.

The mental health segment for the October webinar will focus on eating disorders.

[Register.](#)

---

## Quick links

### Vaccine exemption

A reminder that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta recently shared updated guidance on [vaccination exemption requests](#). A [patient FAQ](#) is also available. AHS also recently released a video titled [Mandatory Vaccination: An Ethics Perspective](#).

## Physician support resources

Recognizing and managing physician [moral distress](#) is the subject of a [Canadian Medical Protective Association podcast](#). The Canadian Medical Association is also offering regular peer group virtual discussions on a variety of topics, including *Preventing and Overcoming Burnout*, which takes place on Thursday, October 21, at 10 a.m. MT. [More details](#).

## COVID Corner

On Wednesday, October 13, from 7-9 p.m., the latest COVID Corner webinar will tackle *The Long Shadow of COVID: Reflecting on Moral Challenges*. [More details](#).

## i4 Virtual Health and Care Conference

On Wednesday, November 3 and Thursday, November 4, the i4 Virtual Health and Care Conference will discuss the biggest challenges facing health care. The conference includes the [Launchpad pitch competition](#), with a deadline of Monday, October 18 for submissions. [More details](#).