

Pandemic RESPONSE

COVID-19 in the Calgary Zone: PCN update – January 28, 2021

Medical Home Q&A with Dr. Christine Luelo

Q. As more patients are vaccinated, what should we be thinking about when side effects occur?

There are two important things to note if your patients experience side effects. First, the requirement to report through AHS [Adverse Event Following Immunization](#) when we reasonably expect that presenting symptoms are an adverse event due to the immunization. Second, side effects after any immunization can mimic symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, aches, fatigue). AHS guidance is as follows:

- If you have side effects that are the same as COVID-19 symptoms, you must stay home and away from others (isolate), even if you think the side effects are from the vaccine.
- If the side effects go away within 48 hours, you do not have to keep isolating, and you can go back to your normal activities. But if you have been told to isolate for other reasons, you must keep isolating.
- If the side effects last longer than 48 hours, stay home. Call Health Link or do the [self-assessment](#) to make an appointment for a COVID-19 test. If you do not get tested, you must stay at home for 10 days from the start of symptoms or until you no longer have symptoms, whichever is longer.
- If you only have redness, swelling, or soreness where you had the needle, you do not need to stay home and away from others.

Q. I'm getting a lot of vaccine-related questions from patients. Is there a single place you would recommend sending them for basic facts or information?

I am also getting lots of vaccine questions from patients, and friends and family! I am starting a lot of conversations, too, as part of regular visits with my patients. Why not spend an extra two minutes after an eight-minute telephone visit (yes, that gets you to 10 minutes = 03.03cv) to explore someone's readiness? Family Practice is so well placed to inform the public and help us realize our provincial goal of more than 70 per cent immunization uptake. I know we don't have supply right now, but it's coming, and we need to have everyone ready. Here are some great links you might want to have on hand [for patients](#). While you are at it, brush up on your own knowledge! [Answering questions about vaccines](#) | [FAQ for physicians](#) | [Health professional information](#) | [Vaccine FAQ for patients](#) | [Vaccine information sheet](#)

Q. I have some vaccine-hesitant patients. Any tips on how to handle that?

Next week's [Calgary Zone webinar](#) is aimed at just this topic. We'll have some practical implementation ideas you can start using in your office right away. An [AMA Talks for Docs webinar](#) earlier this month already touched on this. There are lots of resources being built on a provincial and federal level. [PRoTCT Plan](#) | [19 To Zero: United Against COVID-19](#) | [Register: February 1 webinar](#)

Q. What could/should I do if a colleague is anti-vaccine?

The College of Physician and Surgeons of Alberta does not have a specific directive on this topic, but we can seek guidance from our [Code of Conduct](#). Remember to go to the physician first, with a sense of curiosity and concern for patient safety, rather than rushing to judgement. Try to understand what data they may be relying on to form their position. You can reference the information shared in this Q&A as support for a more informed view. If you are still left feeling that patients are at risk, then seeking advice from the CPSA may be your next step. [CMPA medical-legal considerations](#)

Q. In the last newsletter, the vaccine-in-pregnancy information from SOGC (Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada) seemed to contradict the AHS advice. What's the right answer?

Guidelines are being updated constantly; things are changing really fast. At the time we shared the [vaccination in pregnancy factsheet](#) quoting SOGC guidance, AHS had not yet updated its FAQ. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, we have worked closely with AHS and other partners to align our messaging for greater clarity (thanks to the reader who brought this to our attention!) It has since been updated and can be [read here](#). Also, please note new guidelines for [pregnant healthcare workers](#), and complexities around [safe use of PPE](#) | [SOGC statement on vaccination](#) | [Canadian Rheumatology Association statement](#) | [National Advisory Committee on Immunization statement](#)

Q. If a patient has recently recovered from COVID-19, can they still receive the vaccine?

As per the [AHS guidance](#), there is no mandatory waiting period between having COVID-19 and being immunized. However, it is recommended that people wait until they are feeling better. Patients should NOT be offered COVID-19 vaccine if they have active respiratory symptoms, confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection, or other symptoms of an acute illness. Immunization can be given once they are feeling better. [Rapid evidence report](#) | [Vaccine information for health professionals](#)

Q. Are there any updates related to management of COVID-19 in the community?

Isolation guidelines have not changed, but we have heard there is confusion with regards to families with younger children, especially single parents. We will be making a few small changes to the Specialist LINK adult pathway to help clarify.

In the meantime, for an adult who can self-isolate, it is 14 days of isolation from last contact with the positive case. In cases of families where the child is the positive case, if the child cannot self-isolate within the home, we say parents should isolate from the last day of contact, but that will be 14 days after the presumed 10 days of contagiousness, for a total of 24 days. If there are two parents, one can stay with the child and incur the 24-day longer time, while the second adult can separate from the sick child immediately and begin their 14 days and have a shorter isolation. If there is only one parent, they have no way to shorten the duration.

If the parent is sick, and the child is dependent on them for care, the child's 14 days cannot start until the end of the 10-day infectious period for the adult. So, again, we get to the total of 10+14 = 24 days.

[Isolation and quarantine requirements](#) | [Calgary Zone COVID-19 adult pathway](#) | [Specialist LINK tele-advice](#) | [COVID-19 pediatric testing and isolation pathway](#) | [COVID-19 pediatric outpatient clinical management pathway](#)

Q. Is there a local clinic for COVID-19 ‘long-haulers?’

Pulmonary central access and Triage is receiving referrals for post-COVID-19 cough long-haulers. Patients must have had a cough lasting at least eight weeks post-COVID-19 recovery. A clinic is currently open at [Rockyview General Hospital](#), with a second site based at the Peter Lougheed Centre planned for mid-February. Not sure if your patient is right for the clinic? Go to [Specialist LINK](#) and request respiratory tele-advice to review. The clinic is not for other non-pulmonary long haul symptoms. Stay tuned for more information on rehab plans for patients.

Q. What are the strangest COVID-19 vaccine things you’ve heard?

- It’s illegal for kids to get it. Nope! just don’t have data yet, but it’s coming!
- If you don’t get the immunization you will be locked up in an internment camp. Nope!
- I need to bank my sperm before I get the shot because it will make me infertile.
- I need to bank my sperm before I get the shot because it will change my DNA.
- I have to wait a year after vaccine to legally get pregnant.

Other updates

1 Border pilot program changes

Alberta’s [border testing pilot program](#) has been modified to lengthen the time international travellers must spend in quarantine after arriving at the Calgary International Airport or Coutts land border crossing. The changes are as follows:

- Effective Monday, January 25, participants must remain in quarantine until receiving a negative result from their second test on day seven or eight (counting their arrival day as day one).
- Travellers must immediately return to quarantine if they haven’t taken their second test and received the negative result.
- Program participants cannot return to child care, out-of-school care, schools, post-secondary institutions and workplaces outside their home for 14 days.
- Returning travellers from the United Kingdom or South Africa are not eligible to participate.

2 Vaccine shortages prompt focus on second doses

Due to [vaccine shortages](#), no new first dose appointments are being booked for the next few weeks. Supplies are being allocated to those who require a second dose. [More information](#).

3 Webinars

- On Monday, February 1, from 6 - 8 p.m., the Calgary Zone’s mental health and COVID-19 webinar series returns. Vaccination and alcohol use disorders are the topics of discussion. [Register](#).
- On Thursday, February 4, from 7 – 8:15 p.m., the Alberta College of Family Physicians presents *Team-Based Management of Neck Pain*. [Register](#).
- On Wednesday, February 10, from 7 - 9 p.m., part two of *The Shadow Pandemic* will be featured on COVID Corner. [Register](#). *Vaccines vs. Variants* will be held on Wednesday, March 10. [Register](#).
- On Wednesday, February 17, at noon, the COVID Talks for Docs series continues *with Surviving COVID Financially*. [More information](#) will be available soon.
- On Tuesday, March 23, at noon, the second part of *The COVID-19 Pivot: Vaccine Update for Family Physicians* will be hosted by the College of Family Physicians of Canada. [Register](#).