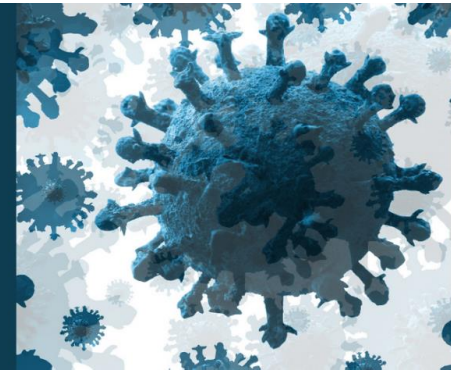


# COVID-19 Immunization Update

For Health Care Providers in Oxford County, Elgin County,  
and the City of St. Thomas



Week of January 25, 2021

## An Update from Dr. Joyce Lock, Medical Officer of Health

*Please share with staff as appropriate.*

### REMINDER: SWPH COVID-19 Vaccination Weekly e-Newsletter

- Southwestern Public Health requires all health care providers and organizations to sign up for our weekly COVID-19 immunization e-newsletter updates. This is the primary way immunization information will be shared across the region. If you have not already signed up, please do so here: <http://eepurl.com/hnoSX5>.
- *Please note: we are legally obliged to request opt-in for this e-newsletter.*

### What You Need to Know this Week:

- On January 25th, in partnership with LHSC, Oxford County EMS, Medavie EMS, and area long-term care homes, Southwestern Public Health successfully completed all first-dose vaccinations in residents of long-term care homes in our region. This is a tremendous accomplishment for everyone involved. We have now begun administering first doses in residents of identified high-risk retirement homes. Read the full news release: <https://www.swpublichealth.ca/en/news/swph-completes-first-dose-vaccinations-in-long-term-care-home-residents.aspx>
- News Release: Ontario Adjusts Vaccination Plan in Response to Pfizer-BioNTech Shipment Delays <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/60091/ontario-adjusts-vaccination-plan-in-response-to-pfizer-biontech-shipment-delays>
- In response to the limited availability of supply from the Federal Government, Ontario is accelerating vaccination for long-term care, high-risk retirement and First Nations elder care home residents, while taking action to protect access to second doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for those who have received their first dose. Please see the enclosed fact sheet for more details regarding delayed second doses of vaccine.
- Read the latest update on Regional Prioritization of COVID-19 Vaccine as of January 27, 2021 enclosed.



**COVID-19  
VACCINE INFO**



## **Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Second Dose Delays**

Due to delivery delays in the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine, the Ontario Government has needed to adjust its vaccination plans. To protect access to second doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for those who have already received their first dose, Ontario will:

- Maintain the recommended maximum interval of 21-27 days for long-term care, retirement and First Nations elder care home resident groups.
- Increase the maximum interval of up to 42 days between the two doses for all other groups.

The recommended interval is being maintained for those who are most at risk for severe illness and death thereby needing the highest level of protection from the vaccine. At this time, residents living in Long Term Care Homes and high-risk Retirement Homes, are being prioritized for all first doses of vaccines.

The above approach is grounded in evidence and supported by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

This direction will be revisited as vaccine availability changes.

### **Quick Facts about Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine:**

- It requires 2 doses to be fully immunized, with 95% efficacy according to clinical trials.
- Although Pfizer-BioNTech was approved by Health Canada for an interval of 21-27 days between the two doses, their data were based on thousands of study participants who received the second dose between 19 and 42 days.
- Our experience with other vaccines shows that people whose booster dose is given later than recommended by the drug manufacturer will have a similar, if not, better immune response.
- Increasing the vaccine dosing interval has been adopted in other Canadian provinces (including Manitoba and Alberta) as well as other countries (including the United Kingdom).
- How much immunity does one dose give you?
  - Based on limited study data it appears to be 92%, but real-world experience is limited.

### **Resources:**

Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines (National Advisory Committee on Immunization)  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html>

Ontario Adjusts Vaccination Plan in Response to Pfizer-BioNTech Shipment Delays (Ontario Government News Release-January 25, 2021)  
<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/60091/ontario-adjusts-vaccination-plan-in-response-to-pfizer-biontech-shipment-delays>



## MEMO: Update on Regional Prioritization of COVID-19 Vaccine

January 27, 2021

Huron Perth Public Health, Middlesex-London Health, and Southwestern Public Health will provide regular updates on the eligibility criteria for recipients of the COVID-19 vaccine in their respective regions.

The Ministry of Health, through the guidance of the provincial COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force led by General Rick Hillier, directs the allocation of the vaccine. Vaccine supply differs by region. Given scarce vaccine supply, a regional **COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization Advisory Committee** has been struck to help inform the public health units decisions regarding further prioritization when necessary. For more information on the COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization Advisory Committee, please visit the Middlesex-London Health Unit website at <https://www.healthunit.com/covid-19-vaccine-prioritization>.

### Supply Constraints

The only product currently available in the region is the Pfizer-BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine. Due to manufacturing delays, no additional product is anticipated in the region before the week of February 1, 2021 at the earliest. **The significant reduction in supply has resulted in further prioritization.**

### Current Provincial Direction on Prioritization

As a result of these delays, on January 25, 2021 the province [directed](#) that all first doses must be prioritized for residents of long-term care, high-risk retirement, and First Nations elder care homes. The target date for delivering vaccine to these individuals is February 5, 2021.

### Additional Regional Direction on Prioritization

Given provincial direction and the limited number of doses that are available regionally, only the following people are eligible to receive the first dose of the vaccine, effective immediately. Eligibility will be reviewed weekly and will be dependent on vaccine supply and Provincial direction.

#### ELIGIBLE FOR FIRST-DOSE:

- Long-term care home residents, as defined by the Ministry of Long-Term Care
- High-risk retirement homes residents, as defined by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
  - Co-located with long-term care homes
  - Containing a memory unit
  - Identified as Red or Yellow by the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA)

### **ELIGIBLE FOR END-OF-DAY DOSES**

At the end of each clinic, there may be a small amount of additional vaccine available that is to be used to avoid wastage.

#### **Eligible for additional vaccine available at end-of-day during a mobile clinic, in the following order:**

1. Long-term care or high-risk retirement home staff\*, first dose
2. Long-term care or high-risk retirement home staff\*, second dose if appropriate
3. Essential caregiver

\* LHIN, Hospital, Primary Care and Paramedic Services staff who are directly providing on-site support to long-term care and retirement homes in outbreak, and have committed to a week or more of attending the facility, are considered as long-term care or high-risk retirement home staff.

### **NOT CURRENTLY ELIGIBLE FOR FIRST-DOSE**

No other individuals are currently eligible for the vaccine in this region. This includes the following exclusions:

- Individuals with active respiratory symptoms.
- Independent living facilities, seniors' apartments, hospice sites, and adult day programs.
- Healthcare workers not explicitly listed in the eligible groups.

### **SECOND-DOSE SCHEDULE**

Consistent with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), some jurisdictions may maximize the number of individuals benefiting from a first dose of Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine by delaying the second dose until further supplies of the vaccine become available, preferably within 42 days of receipt of the first dose.

#### **Given the scarce vaccine supply, the Province has directed the following:**

- All second doses for residents of long-term care, retirement and First Nations elder care homes will be delivered at 21-27 days after their first dose.
- All second-doses of for all other groups will be rescheduled up to 42 days after their first dose.

#### **Update on Western Fair Agriplex Clinic**

The Western Fair Agriplex Clinic is currently closed due to the reductions in vaccine supply. The clinic will re-open to deliver second doses within the 42-day interval. Individual awaiting their second dose of vaccine who are not residents of long-term care, retirement and First Nations elder care homes will be contacted and notified of a new appointment time.