

COVID-19 Immunization Update

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



December 17, 2021

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

Please share with staff as appropriate.

What You Need to Know This Week

1. THIRD DOSES IN ONTARIO

- On December 15, [Ontario expanded eligibility of third doses to age 18 and older](#) beginning December 20, 2021. The province also adjusted the interval to 3 months between second and third doses.
- Appointments at Southwestern Public Health clinics will be available starting at 8 a.m. on Monday, December 20.
- **Due to vaccine supply concerns, vaccine brand choice will not be available at the clinic.** Individuals aged 18 to 29 will be prioritized for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine supply, [as advised by the Ministry of Health](#).
- Appointments are required. Anyone who presents to a public health vaccination clinic without an appointment will be turned away.
- Southwestern Public Health will reopen its waiting list on Monday, December 20 for the public to sign up for an end of day dose, if one is available.
- There are very limited appointments available between now and early January.
- **Those aged 50+ or healthcare workers who already have a third dose appointment booked at the previous 6-month interval are encouraged to retain their appointment and NOT cancel at this time, as there likely will not be an earlier appointment available.**
- Anyone who does book an earlier appointment elsewhere is reminded to cancel their original appointment.

2. OMICRON: CASE AND CONTACT MANAGEMENT UPDATES

- On December 16, Southwestern Public Health issued a public statement to stress the [urgency needed to prevent Omicron spread](#).
- In it included a new process for case and contact management for positive cases and close contacts, in response to Provincial direction to prioritize vaccination.
- Please remind patients/clients of this new guidance on your own website and communication channels:
 - If you test positive for COVID-19:
 - Self isolate for 10 days since symptom onset or since being tested, regardless of vaccination status

Southwestern Public Health
www.swpublichealth.ca
1-800-922-0096



- Inform close contacts so that they know to self isolate as well
- Remind individuals of self-isolate definition and directions
- Remind individuals of close contact definition: anyone you have interacted within 6 feet of, for 15 minutes or more, within the 2 days before symptom onset or testing date
- If you are a close contact to a confirmed case:
 - Book a PCR test right away and again on or after Day 7
 - Self isolate for 10 days since the last date you interacted with the positive case, regardless of vaccination status
 - Remain in self isolation for the full 10 days, regardless of test result (e.g. negative)
- If you are a close contact of a confirmed case in a high-risk group or health care setting (e.g. Long-Term Care or Retirement Homes):
 - Public health will contact these individuals with directions for testing and self isolation
 - Only these individuals are eligible to call 1-800-922-0096 ext. 9 with questions; calls about all other queries about general exposures that are not in high-risk settings will not be returned

3. INTERIM IPAC AND PPE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Public Health Ontario has published interim IPAC recommendations for use of PPE for health care workers due to the undetermined impact of the Omicron variant.
- View it here: https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/updated-ipac-measures-covid-19.pdf?sc_lang=en

4. REMINDER: POST-VACCINATION MEASURES

- It is imperative that all individuals who receive a COVID-19 vaccination are reminded to **continue following all other public health measures**, particularly as new variants of concern emerge.
- Provide rationale: “This is to protect those around them who are not fully vaccinated, and to prevent further community spread.”
- This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Practice diligent hand hygiene
 - Wear a face covering, especially indoors, even in small gatherings (e.g. in other people’s homes)
 - Maintain physical distance and avoid crowded spaces
 - Limit time spent indoors with people you do not live with

5. SWPH REGION VACCINATION RATES

- Data from the Ministry of Health as of December 16:
 - Percentage of SWPH 5+ population with at least one dose: 80.4%
 - Percentage of SWPH 5+ population with both doses: 75.8%
 - Percentage of SWPH 70+ population with three doses: 42.9%
 - Number of SWPH residents with three doses: 22,446

6. NON-VACCINE SERVICES: HOLIDAY HOURS OF OPERATION

- Needle Exchange Program (NEP) services will be unavailable from December 24 at 4:30 p.m. through January 3 at 8:30 a.m.
- COVID-19 data dashboard will not be updated from December 25 to January 2; reports resume January 3
- Sexual Health service schedule for St. Thomas:
 - December 22 – Drop-in from 1 to 4 p.m., evening physician-led clinic is cancelled
 - December 24 – Reduced drop-in from 9 to 12:30 (No testing available this day)
 - Closed December 27 through January 2, reopens January 3
- Sexual Health services schedule for Woodstock:
 - Week of December 20 – Only emergency birth control, STI contact/treatment, pregnancy options counselling available; phone assessments required first
 - December 22 – Clinic day is cancelled
 - Closed December 27 through January 2, reopens January 3

7. ONTARIO STRENGTHENING RESPONSE TOOMICRON

- At 4 p.m. on today, the Province announced new measures to prevent the spread of Omicron.
- Details: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001366/ontario-further-strengthening-response-to-omicron>