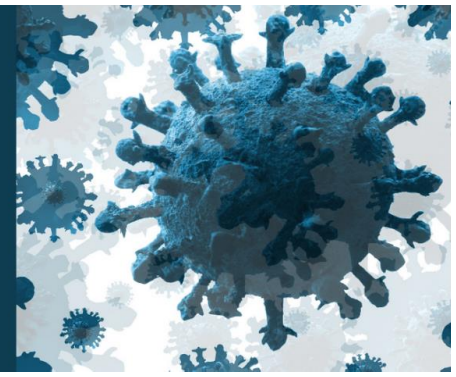


# COVID-19 Immunization Update

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](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>