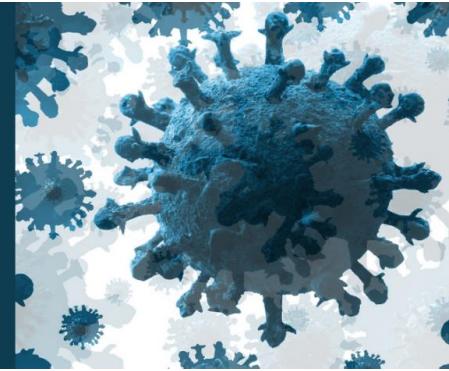


COVID-19 Immunization Update

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



Week of April 5, 2021

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

Please share with staff as appropriate.

What You Need to Know this Week:

- On April 6, the following group was added to the eligibility in our region:
 - **Adults aged 65 and older (including those turning 65 in 2021)**
 - **In addition, clarification for primary essential caregivers eligible individuals with an eligible highest-risk health condition was outlined further:**
 - Primary essential caregivers are individuals who provide regular and sustained assistance with personal care and/or activities of daily living.
 - **NEW!** For clarity, if the individual with the eligible health condition cannot receive the vaccine (e.g. under the age of 16), the primary essential caregiver is still eligible.
- Individuals aged 55 and older are also currently eligible for vaccination **at participating pharmacies**, as coordinated through the Province. covid-19.ontario.ca/vaccine-locations. Our message remains that **eligible individuals should accept any COVID-19 vaccine that is available to them, as early as possible. The benefit of vaccination currently outweighs the risks of not being vaccinated.**
- Related, the [Centre for Effective Practice](#) publishes resources to assist with patient discussions to curb vaccine hesitancy.
- A reminder, due to vaccine supply, the booking system used by both the Middlesex-London Health Unit and Southwestern Public Health currently requires a password-protected entry for those eligible due to highest-risk health condition. Southwestern Public Health has created a simplified registration process for health care providers (specialists) to register **their practice** if they have any patients who fit the eligibility criteria. This process is [outlined in a health alert](#) distributed on April 1 through Rave Alert.
- Southwestern Public Health continues to receive shipments of the Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca, and Moderna vaccines locally.
- Last week, Southwestern Public Health expanded our help list to invite those aged 75 and older to sign up for appointment booking support. This is an equitable solution to allocating our end of day doses or to fill cancellations we receive throughout the day. Please share this form with individuals in your practice aged 75+ who may need booking support: forms.swpublichealth.ca/COVID-19-Help-List

- On April 7, the Province announced several cohorts will soon come into eligibility across Ontario. An update on how this affects our region:
 - Our priority continues to be delivering vaccine to people of advanced age or highest-risk health condition, since they are more at-risk of complications from COVID.
 - We work with MLHU and Huron Perth Public Health to allocate our regional vaccine supply, and are currently discussing teachers – specifically those who work with children who have special needs –, essential workers who cannot work from home, and those aged 60+.
 - While these groups are not yet eligible in our region due to vaccine supply, they will become eligible soon. A registration process is also in development for essential workers.
 - As well, the Province identified a postal code in Aylmer as a Hot Spot. Vaccinations are underway in that region, starting with large congregate settings, such as the Police College. We are finalizing our approach to offer vaccinations to those aged 50 and older in this region.
- On April 7, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) released [its full statement](#) on its extended dose interval recommendation. The statement provides the detailed evidence summaries and complete analysis that support the recommendation to extend the time between the first and second dose of COVID-19 vaccines up to four months. [A summary is also available](#).
- Mobile clinics are exclusively considered for individuals who are medically unable to leave their home (e.g. medically bed-bound) or would require medical mobility transportation (e.g. ambulance). If you have a patient who meets this description, send a request via fax to (519) 539-6206 for consideration.