

# COVID-19 Immunization Update

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



Week of May 10, 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. ELIGIBILITY

- Visit [www.swpublichealth.ca/eligibility](http://www.swpublichealth.ca/eligibility) for a full list of who is currently eligible.
- Pre-registration to obtain a login and password for workplaces and congregate living settings is no longer required. All eligible groups have moved to self-attestation.
- These groups became eligible this week:
  - **Essential workers aged 16 and older who cannot work from home**
    - Review the Ministry's [Guidance for Prioritization of Phase 2 Populations](#). Anyone who is 16 or older who cannot do their work from home or virtually is eligible starting May 11.
    - Those who are able to work from home are not eligible.
    - Only those who have turned 18 by the date of their appointment can book at the Tillsonburg clinic, as they only offer Moderna.
  - **Adults aged 16 and older who with specific at-risk health conditions, including:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Immune deficiencies/autoimmune disorders</li><li>○ Stroke/cerebrovascular disease</li><li>○ Diabetes</li><li>○ Dementia</li><li>○ Liver disease</li><li>○ All other cancers</li><li>○ Respiratory diseases</li><li>○ Spleen problems (e.g. asplenia)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Heart disease</li><li>○ Hypertension with end organ damage</li><li>○ Diagnosis of a mental disorder</li><li>○ Substance use disorders</li><li>○ Sickle Cell disease</li><li>○ Thalassemia</li><li>○ Immunocompromising health conditions</li><li>○ Other disabilities requiring direct support care in the community</li></ul>
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- **Adults aged 40 and older (starting May 23 at 8 a.m.)**

## 2. MINISTRY PAUSING FIRST DOSES OF ASTRAZENECA'S COVISHIELD

- On May 11, the Ministry of Health [issued a news release](#) outlining its decision to pause first dose administration for AstraZeneca's COVISHIELD vaccine, effective immediately.
- The Ontario Science Advisory Table, provincial and federal partners, and our colleagues at Public Health Ontario are the data related to VITT rare blood clot incidences closely and have made the decision to pause in an abundance of caution.
- Data from the UK suggests a much-reduced risk of VITT in second doses. More guidance is expected soon.
- **Reaffirm with those who received a first dose that they made a good choice to prevent illness and to protect their family and loved ones from COVID-19.**
- We await the NACI and Ontario's Science Advisory Table analysis to determine local recommendations for vaccine supply that remains, including what primary care and pharmacy should do with their supply.

## 3. VACCINE BRAND MIXING

- Currently, it is not yet advised to mix brands for COVID-19 vaccination, such as first dose with one brand and second dose with another.
- Health Minister Christine Elliott has suggested it may be likely to begin mixing brands soon due to a shortage in the AstraZeneca supply in Canada. The Ministry is awaiting further guidance from NACI.

## 4. TIMING BETWEEN VACCINES

- Pregnant individuals are no longer required to wait 14 days between their Tdap booster and their COVID-19 vaccination. An updated Medical Directive will be provided soon.

## 5. SHORTENED SECOND DOSE INTERVAL FOR HIGHEST-RISK HEALTHCARE WORKERS

- On May 14 at 8 a.m., specific populations are eligible to re-schedule their second dose vaccine earlier than the four-month scheduled outlined by the Ministry of Health.
- Eligible groups include:
  - All hospital and acute care staff in frontline roles with COVID-19 patients and/or with a highest-risk of exposure to COVID-19, including nurses and personal support workers and those performing aerosol-generating procedures
    - Critical care units
    - Emergency departments and urgent care departments
    - COVID-19 medical units
    - Code blue teams, rapid response teams
    - General internal medicine and other specialties involved in the direct care of COVID-19 positive patients

- All patient-facing healthcare workers involved in the COVID-19 response
    - COVID-19 specimen collection centres (e.g. Assessment Centres, community COVID-19 testing locations)
    - Teams supporting outbreak response (e.g. Infection Prevention and Control teams supporting outbreak management, inspectors in the patient environment, redeployed healthcare workers supporting outbreaks or staffing crisis in congregate living settings)
    - COVID-19 vaccine clinics and mobile immunization teams
    - Mobile testing teams
    - COVID-19 isolation centres
    - COVID-19 laboratory services
    - Current members of Ontario's Emergency Medical Assistance team who may be deployed at any time to support an emergency response
  - Medical First Responders
    - ORNGE
    - Paramedics
    - Firefighters providing medical first response as part of their regular duties
    - Police and special constables providing medical first response as part of their regular duties
  - Community healthcare workers serving specialized populations
    - Needle exchange/syringe programs and supervised consumption and treatment services
    - Indigenous health care service providers such as Aboriginal Health Access Centres, Indigenous Community Health Centres, Indigenous Interprofessional Primary Care Teams, and Indigenous Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics
  - Long-Term Care and Retirement Home workers, including nurses, personal support workers, and essential caregivers
  - Individuals working in Community Health Centres serving disproportionately affected communities and/or communities experiencing the highest burden of health, social, and economic impacts from COVID-19
  - Critical healthcare workers in remote and hard-to-access communities (e.g. sole practitioner)
  - Home and community care healthcare workers, including nurses and personal support workers caring for recipients of chronic homecare and seniors in congregate living facilities or providing hands-on care to COVID-19 patients in the community
- Appointments can only be re-scheduled by calling 226-289-3560 from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. 7 days a week. It is recommended individuals be vaccinated at the same location where they received their first dose.