

## COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is working with the [Government of Alberta](#) to plan for the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine in our province, which will happen in phases.

More information is available at [www.ahs.ca/covidvaccine](http://www.ahs.ca/covidvaccine).

### **Adapted for AgeCare Staff, source AHS COVID-19 Staff FAQs**

December 14, 2020, <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-2019-staff-faq.pdf>

#### **How many doses are available in Alberta in this first phase?**

- The vaccine's preliminary rollout will begin the week of December 14, when Alberta will receive the vaccine. Initially, the vaccine will be available in small quantities, requiring a phased approach to immunization.
- During the first few months of 2021, the vaccine will be offered to residents and staff of continuing care sites, seniors aged 75 and older, on-reserve First Nations residents and residents of Métis Settlements over age 65, and health care workers needed to ensure workforce capacity and likely to transmit COVID-19 to those at greatest risk.
- It will take many months for our province to receive enough vaccine for everyone to be immunized.
- The Government of Alberta has sequenced all in the first phases of the rollout before it will be available to the average risk members of the public.

#### **Who will get the COVID-19 vaccine first?**

- The first round of vaccines arrives in Edmonton and Calgary, the zones with the highest rates and cases of COVID-19, the week of December 14. Immunizations are scheduled to begin on December 16 for a relatively small number of healthcare workers in both cities.
- On December 21, additional vaccines will arrive in Alberta and rolled out to pre-identified staff province-wide starting later that week.
- Staff identified to receive the first round of immunizations starting in December include some eligible continuing health care workers (HCWs).
- AHS and Alberta Health have carefully selected these staff based on their level of interaction with COVID-19-positive cases, their interaction with vulnerable Albertans, and their role within the frontlines of the COVID-19 response.

#### **How will I get the vaccine?**

- AHS will notify staff who will be eligible to receive immunization in this preliminary phase.
- Staff included in the preliminary phase will be contacted directly. They will travel to designated immunization sites as the vaccine cannot be transported from the site where it is stored.

### **Are all health care workers expected to get the vaccine? What if I decline?**

- The COVID-19 vaccine is voluntary for HCWs in Alberta. We encourage all HCWs to get the vaccine to help protect themselves, their residents, and communities against COVID-19.

### **Will I still have to wear full PPE if I get a vaccination?**

- Immunized HCWs are still required to adhere to existing PPE guidance, including continuous masking, continuous eye protection, and IPC recommendations for COVID-19.
- Currently, there is insufficient evidence on the duration of protection and effectiveness of reducing transmission of COVID-19.
- While the vaccines being delivered have shown very high effectiveness in clinical trials, no vaccines are 100 percent protective. Vaccination does not change PPE requirements.
- The vaccine requires 2 doses given three weeks apart for maximum effectiveness.

### **Are staff able to leave work during their scheduled shift to be immunized?**

- We want to encourage and enable staff to be vaccinated. When an appointment is scheduled during worked hours, manager approval is required, and managers will ensure appropriate coverage for the duration of the absence (appointment and travel time).

### **What is the course of action if managers are unable to let staff leave during work time (due to workload or competing priorities) to be immunized?**

- AgeCare will make every effort to enable staff to attend offsite immunization clinics.

### **What if I meet COVID-19 exposure criteria through having close contact with COVID-19 case or international travel after being vaccinated? Am I still required to quarantine?**

- HCWs who meet current COVID-19 exposure criteria (e.g., unprotected close contact with a COVID-19 case, return to Alberta from international travel) will still be required to quarantine. Vaccination does not change the quarantine requirements.

### **How does this COVID-19 vaccine work?**

- The approved vaccine is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. The vaccine contains the genetic instructions for making a protein that is found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- It uses our cells to make this protein and triggers our immune system to make antibodies against it. Then, if the real virus enters our body in the future, these antibodies will help fight the infection.

### **Can this COVID-19 vaccine give me a coronavirus infection?**

- The vaccine approved by Health Canada this week does not contain the virus so it cannot give you COVID-19.

### **Should I leave a gap between getting the flu and COVID-19 vaccines?**

- Everyone should get immunized against influenza each year. Having both illnesses at once can be dangerous.
- AHS recommends individuals wait at least 28 days after the administration of the two-dose COVID-19 vaccine to get another vaccine, including the flu shot.
- AHS also recommends waiting for at least 14 days after administering another vaccine, including the flu shot, before getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

### **What if I miss the second dose of the vaccine?**

- If the administration of the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine is delayed, the second dose should be provided as soon as possible.
- While a single dose may afford some protection, the evidence for this and the duration of that protection are not clear.
- Therefore, every effort should be made to vaccinate with the second dose according to the recommended schedule. While there may be some protection provided by a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine, full protection requires the completion of the recommended doses.

### **If I am an eligible HCW, are there any circumstances in which I should NOT be offered the COVID-19?**

- This vaccine is not recommended for pregnant, breastfeeding, immunosuppressed individuals, or those who have an autoimmune or bleeding disorder.
- It may also not be given to those who previously have had an allergic reaction to any of the vaccine ingredients.
- In some situations, HCW's would be asked to defer their appointment, including if they have received another vaccine in the last two weeks or are currently experiencing an acute febrile illness.
- While individuals with mild symptoms would be eligible for the vaccine, in order to protect the health and safety of staff and the public, anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or required to isolate/quarantine should not attend an immunization appointment and should rebook for a later date.

### **What are the possible side effects?**

- In general, there are common side effects of the vaccine, including pain at the site of injection, body chills, headache, feeling tired, and feeling feverish.
- These side effects are usually mild or moderate and resolve within a few days of vaccination. As with all vaccines, there is also the chance of an allergic reaction that can be treated by the health care provider who delivers the vaccine.
- People with known allergies to any of the vaccine's ingredients should postpone immunizations for the time being.

### **What happens to staff who were vaccinated in Alberta and become ill?**

- As with all vaccines, there's a chance that there will be side effects. Side effects include pain at the injection site and redness and swelling at the injection site.
- These local side effects are usually mild or moderate and resolve within a few days of vaccination.
- Systemic side effects include fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, and fever.
- These systemic side effects are usually mild or moderate and resolve within a few days of vaccination.
- Since these systemic side effects are similar to symptoms of COVID-19, HCWs should be directed to follow existing immunization after-care guidance.

### **What if I am allergic to ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccine?**

- It's possible that someone may have an allergic reaction after receiving COVID-19 vaccine.
- Individuals with known allergies to any of the components of the vaccine should not receive it.
- These vaccine components include:
  - Medicinal ingredient:
    - Tozinameran (mRNA encoding the Spike protein for the SARS-CoV-2 virus)
  - Non-medicinal ingredients:
    - ALC-0315 = (4-hydroxybutyl)azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis(2-hexyldecanoate)
    - ALC-0159 = 2-[(polyethylene glycol)-2000]-N,N-ditetradecylacetamide
    - 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine
    - Cholesterol
    - dibasic sodium phosphate dehydrate
    - monobasic potassium phosphate
    - potassium chloride
    - sodium chloride