

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

General COVID-19 Vaccine Information

1. When will Renfrew County and District residents receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

RCDHU will be aligning the COVID-19 vaccination rollout as directed by the [Ministry of Health](#) and is working to ensure residents receive the vaccine as soon as they become eligible, and as the vaccine supply permits. Timelines will be set, and clinics scheduled based on vaccine availability. For the most up-to-date information on vaccine rollout in the coming months, stay tuned to Renfrew County and District Health Unit's (RCDHU) [COVID-19 webpage](#).

2. What vaccines are available for use in Canada?

Health Canada has approved four vaccines for use in Canada to date:

- Pfizer-BioNTech – approved on December 9, 2020 for individuals 16 years and older.
- Moderna – approved on December 23, 2020 for individuals 18 years and older.
- AstraZeneca – As of March 30, 2021, AstraZeneca vaccine is only available through pharmacy and primary care settings for those 55 years of age and older in Ontario. In alignment with updated National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI) recommendations Ontario will not be using the AstraZeneca vaccine for individuals under 55, while the data are being reviewed by Health Canada. It would also be accurate to say that AstraZeneca is currently only available in limited parts of the province in primary care and pharmacy settings.
- Janssen - approved on March 05, 2021 for individuals who are 18 years of age and older.

Depending on vaccine availability, RCD residents could receive any of the approved vaccines. For further information, please see Health Canada's [COVID-19 Vaccines Webpage](#).

3. What about clients with specific health issues or conditions?

There may be clients with specific health issues that would like to receive the vaccine, including:

- Autoimmune conditions
- Pregnancy
- Breastfeeding
- Suspected hypersensitivity to the vaccine or one of its components
- Bleeding disorder that is not optimally managed

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For these clients, COVID-19 vaccination requires an assessment of the risks and benefits of vaccination with the health care provider most familiar with their current medical condition (e.g., primary care physician, medical specialist, or nurse practitioner). Clients can only be immunized if a health care provider conducts a situational assessment and deems that the benefits outweigh the risks, and informed consent is obtained, including discussion about the insufficient evidence from clinical trials. See the [COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) for guidance on vaccination of clients with specific health issues, including recommendations and documentation required for vaccination.

4. Is getting the COVID-19 vaccine voluntary?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines will not be mandatory, but you are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated.

5. Will I be able to get treated at the hospital if I have not received a COVID-19 vaccine yet?

Yes, as both you and the hospital staff will be required to follow all the necessary public health measures.

6. Will I have to receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I am healthy?

A complete vaccine series with a currently authorized COVID-19 vaccine should be offered to individuals in the authorized age group without contradictions to the vaccine. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant harms morbidity and mortality, as well as social and economic disruption across Canada and rest of the world. The authorized COVID-19 vaccines that are recommended for use by the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#) have been shown to be safe, as well as effective against symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19.

7. Why is Ontario extending the interval between first and second doses? What evidence is available to support this?

NACI has provided recommendation to extend the vaccination dose interval up to 16 weeks for the three two-dose vaccines currently approved by Health Canada while maintaining a strong and sustained level of protection from COVID-19.

Current evidence from real-world experience indicates high vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease, hospitalization and death from COVID-19 two months after the first dose, including among older populations.

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8. Why is RCD seemingly behind other regions for vaccinating other priority populations?

RCDHU and other community partners are only able to vaccinate depending on the available vaccine supply. RCD was one of the last regions to receive COVID-19 vaccine shipments.

Eligibility and Timing

9. How do you determine who can get the COVID-19 vaccine and when?

The Government of Canada is responsible for approval and procurement of COVID-19 vaccine supply. The Government of Ontario is responsible for the distribution of these vaccines across the province. The [Ethical Framework for COVID-19 vaccine distribution](#) guides how the provincial government prioritizes and distributes vaccines across Ontario. An RCHDU Prioritization Committee makes decisions about priority groups using Ontario Ministry of Health (MOH) guidance in the [three-phased vaccine distribution implementation plan](#) to determine who is eligible to receive the vaccine and when.

10. How will I know when it is my turn to receive the vaccine?

Eligible groups will be notified through various multi-media channels, including public service announcements, that they are eligible to receive the vaccine. Please note that this does not mean that individuals will receive a direct phone call or email. It will be announced at a broader level and is the responsibility of individuals to access that information and book vaccine appointments through the appropriate channels. Please stay tuned to the [RCDHU COVID-19 webpage](#).

11. I am an older adult, but I do not live in a long-term care or retirement home. When can I be vaccinated against COVID-19?

Residents born in 1956 or earlier (65 years of age and older) are now eligible to receive their COVID-19 vaccinations. Residents 55 years of age and over will be able to book AstraZeneca vaccination appointments at RCD's public clinics in addition to local pharmacies.

12. I am an essential worker. When can I be vaccinated against COVID-19?

Frontline essential workers, including: first responders, teachers and other education staff and food processing workers are expected to be offered vaccines in Phase 2 from March to July 2021. Specific timing will depend on availability of vaccines. The provincial task force, in addition to the RCD COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization Committee, use the ethical framework and the best available data to identify other priority populations within this phase, based on

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available vaccine supply.

13. What do people need to confirm proof of eligibility for specific priority groups?

Everyone registering for a vaccination appointment will be asked to identify how they are eligible to receive the vaccine. This can include:

- ID badge
- Letter from employer
- Government issued Status Card and non-government issued Indigenous Association Status Card
- Inuit Beneficiary Card
- Métis Card
- 60s Scoop Acceptance Letter
- Ontario Health Card or other documents to verify age

14. What do I need to bring to my appointment as an individual who is 65+ years of age?

- Please bring your list of current medications.
- Please bring assistive devices if needed (e.g., scooter, wheelchair, cane).
- Please bring reading glasses and/or hearing aid if required.
- Where necessary, one support person will be able to accompany those being vaccinated (e.g., mobility, hearing or visual support). Your support person will not be eligible to receive the vaccine unless they fall into a category for eligibility and have registered for their own appointment.
- Individuals will also be required to show their Ontario Health Card or other document to verify their age at their appointment.
- Review the [RCD COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment Checklist](#)

15. When can the public get vaccinated against COVID-19?

Starting as early as July 2021, it is anticipated that all remaining Ontarians in the general population who wish to be vaccinated will be offered a COVID-19 vaccine. Stay tuned to the [Getting a COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario](#) webpage for updates.

16. When can I register and book an appointment to get the vaccine?

With confirmation that regular weekly shipments of the COVID-19 vaccine will be coming to Renfrew County and District (RCD), the list of those eligible to register to book a

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vaccination appointment will now be expanded to include the next priority groups as outlined by the province. For a detailed list of eligible groupings, visit www.rcdhu.com.

These priority groups include: All residents and staff of congregate living facilities, Long-Term Care and Retirement Home essential caregivers, People born in 1956 or earlier (65 years of age and older), Indigenous residents (on or off reserve) who are 18 years of age and older, all health care workers, education staff supporting students with complex special education needs, faith based leaders who, as part of their role, provide end of life care, care of the deceased, home visits to unwell persons, or pastoral care in LTC/RHs or other vulnerable settings and anyone receiving chronic home care that have been identified by home health care organizations. Individuals that are receiving chronic home care will receive a call notifying them that they are eligible and should book an appointment after receiving this call.

In addition to these groups, Residents with the following high-risk health conditions and **one** essential caregiver for those in the high-risk health condition group: Organ transplant recipients, Stem cell transplant recipients, Neurological diseases in which breathing function may be impacted (e.g., motor neuron disease, myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis, ALS, acquired brain injury), Haematological malignancy (acute lymphocytic (ALL), chronic lymphocytic (CLL), acute myeloid (AML), chronic myeloid (CML)), myeloma, and lymphoma (Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's (NHL)), Kidney disease eGFR < 30, Obesity (BMI > 40), Treatments causing immunosuppression (e.g., chemotherapy, immunity- weakening medications such as long-term steroid treatment rheumatoid arthritis, lupus), and Intellectual or developmental disabilities (e.g., Down Syndrome).

Please note that the availability of vaccination appointments will be based on the number of vaccine doses that RCD receives each week. Because of this, people should anticipate that it will take a number of weeks for everyone in the new groupings to be able to book and receive their vaccinations.

17. Where can residents access the AstraZeneca vaccine in RCD?

Residents 55 years of age and over will be able to book vaccination appointments at RCD's public clinics in addition to [local pharmacies](#) (view the link to see a list of eligible pharmacies). All appointments for the AstraZeneca vaccine will be booked online through the Renfrew County and District COVID-19 Vaccine Registration System at www.rcdhu.com. Appointments using AstraZeneca will be clearly identified as part of the booking process since there are age restrictions for its use. **If you cannot register online**, call RCDHU at 613-735-9724 or 1-800-267-1097 ext. 200. Please leave one message only

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with your name and number.

18. How will I know if I am included in the “adults that receive chronic home care category?”

As per [Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan](#), adults that receive chronic home care are eligible during Phase 1. Through consultation with the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and various local agencies that provide home and health care services, RCDHU has already identified individuals eligible in this population. These individuals have received a phone call to inform them of their eligibility.

19. I am a HCW that has not been vaccinated yet. Did I miss my opportunity?

Once you become eligible to register and book your vaccination appointment, you will always be eligible to register and book your vaccination appointment. Please visit: www.rcdhu.com to register with the booking system to receive your shot. If you are unable to register online, ask a family member or friend if they can assist you. If a person is unable to register online, they can call RCDHU at 613-735-9724 or 1-800-267-1097 extension 200. Residents are asked to only leave one message with their name and phone number, and someone will return their call as soon as possible.

20. What groups can register but are currently not able to book appointments?

After residents born in 1956 or earlier (65 years of age and older), Indigenous adults 18 years of age and older, all health care workers, education staff supporting students with complex special education needs, and all other previously mentioned groups from Question 16 have been vaccinated, residents in the general population born between 1957-1961 (60-64 years of age) will be next. Please note, people born between 1957-1961 (60-64 years of age) are unable to book appointments. However, residents 55 years of age and over will be able to book AstraZeneca vaccination appointments at RCD's public clinics in addition to [local pharmacies](#) (view the link to see a list of eligible pharmacies) through the Renfrew County and District COVID-19 Vaccine Registration System at www.rcdhu.com. Stay tuned for further updates. **All eligible individuals noted above will be notified when they are able to register through various media channels.**

21. Can people who have already tested positive for COVID-19 get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Those who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 should still be vaccinated and people do not need COVID-19 testing prior to vaccination.

22. If my spouse is over 65 and I am under 65, as his primary caregiver living with him, can I get the vaccine when he does (he will need assistance to go

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for his shot)?

Where necessary, one support person will be able to accompany those being vaccinated (e.g., mobility, hearing or visual support). Your support person will not be eligible to receive the vaccine unless they fall into a category for eligibility and have registered for their own appointment.

However, residents 55 years of age and over will be able to book AstraZeneca vaccination appointments at RCD's public clinics in addition to [local pharmacies](#) (view the link to see a list of eligible pharmacies) through the Renfrew County and District COVID-19 Vaccine Registration System at www.rcdhu.com.

23. Can people under the age of 16 receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

NACI recommends that COVID-19 vaccines should not be offered routinely to individuals who are not in the authorized age group. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was approved on December 9, 2020 for individuals 16 years and older.

However, adolescents between 12 and 15 years of age could be eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine under exceptional circumstances (or on a case-by-case basis) and would require a medical consultation with a primary care provider first to discuss the risks and benefits.

Booking an Appointment

24. How will I be able to book an appointment to get the vaccine? What if I do not have access to the internet, email or don't know how to register online?

An online, centralized, vaccine booking system referred to as the Renfrew County and District COVID-19 Vaccine Registration System, can be accessed through www.rcdhu.com. Those who are currently eligible for vaccination are encouraged to register online as this is often quicker. It is recommended to ask a family member or friend to assist if they are unable to do so themselves. If a person is unable to register online, they can call RCDHU at 613-735-9724 or 1-800-267-1097 extension 200. Residents are asked to only leave one message with their name and phone number, and someone will return their call as soon as possible.

25. Should I book an appointment through the provincial online booking system or through the RCD online booking system?

At this time, both online systems will take people to the same website where they can register to book a COVID-19 vaccination appointment.

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26. Can someone book on my behalf, or can I book on someone's behalf?

Yes, if you require support from someone or if you are supporting someone who is eligible to book an appointment.

27. Do we get to choose which vaccine we get?

No, as of current, residents will not get to choose which vaccine they get. This will be based on provincial distribution, availability to local regions and supply. Remember "the best vaccine, is the one that is available to you".

28. Can we choose where we receive the vaccine?

There will be multiple locations throughout RCD where vaccinations clinics will be offered.

Fixed immunization clinics, for Phase 2 and 3 of the provincial plan will run collaboratively with the support of our primary care, pharmacies, paramedics, hospitals and municipalities as a minimum to support the immunization and administration needs for these clinics. Our municipalities will be a key partner in providing venues to host fixed immunization style clinics, as well as support with set up, take down of clinics, and traffic flow. Clinics will be hosted across the region and planned by the Local Planning Tables. The clinics will be geographically spread out and mobile vaccination teams and temporary sites will be explored to ensure maximum uptake of vaccine. Fixed immunization style clinics will be hosted in the following five regions of RCD:

- Arnprior and area
- Renfrew and area
- Barry's Bay and area
- Pembroke and area
- Deep River and area

29. What happens if there are no appointments left to book?

It is recommended that you still register through the online booking system, which can be accessed by visiting www.rcdhu.com. If you are unable to register online, please ask a family member or friend if they can assist you. If a person is unable to register online, they can call RCDHU at 613-735-9724 or 1-800-267-1097 extension 200. Residents are asked to only leave one message with their name and phone number, and someone will return their call as soon as possible.

30. How will I be notified when it is my turn to get the vaccine?

As supply increases in the coming months, there will be communication through various media channels about who is eligible to present where for vaccination. Please stay

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tuned to the [RCDHU COVID-19 webpage](#) for updates.

31. What happens if someone misses their “vaccination window – can you still get an appointment?

You have not missed your opportunity, as you will always be eligible to register and book your vaccination appointment. Please visit: www.rcdhu.com to register with the online booking system to receive your vaccine. If you are unable to register online, ask a family member or friend if they can assist you. If a person is unable to register online, they can call RCDHU at 613-735-9724 or 1-800-267-1097 extension 200. Residents are asked to only leave one message with their name and phone number, and someone will return their call as soon as possible.

32. How will you get the notification of your second appointment?

You will receive notification on when you can register for your second vaccination appointment. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

33. What does Ontario extending the interval between first and second doses mean for individuals who have already been booked for their second dose? Will their appointment get pushed back and will they receive the same type of vaccine?

With some limited exceptions, Ontarians will receive their second dose 16 weeks after their first dose. Individuals who have already booked their second dose will have their appointments rescheduled. Continuous monitoring of emerging research and real-world effectiveness studies is warranted, and ongoing consideration of alternate methods of increasing protection for this group (e.g. ring vaccination) will be assessed going forward.

The following groups will continue to receive their second dose of vaccine between 21 to 42 days:

- Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges and Assisted Living facilities who are at the greatest risk of both exposure to COVID-19 and serious illness and death.
- Individuals with malignant hematologic disorders and non-hematologic malignant solid tumors receiving active treatment (chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy), excluding individuals receiving solely hormonal therapy or radiation therapy, should receive the COVID-19 vaccine at the dose interval as indicated in the product monographs
- Transplant recipients (including solid organ transplants and hematopoietic stem

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cell transplants) should receive the COVID-19 vaccine at the dose interval as indicated in the product monographs for COVID-19 vaccines.

34. How do I get my elderly parents vaccinated when they can't really leave their place of residence? Can someone come to the home to do it?

There is a local working group planning for vaccine administration to populations that may require alternative locations or support to receive their vaccines safely.

Precautions to take while waiting for a vaccination

35. What can I do now and how can I help?

It is essential that we all continue to do our part to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in the community: limit your close contacts to those within your household, practice physical distance, wear a mask, wash your hands, stay home except for essential reasons, and follow local and [Provincial guidance](#).

Until vaccines are widely available, it remains important to take steps to protect yourself, your loved ones, and our community against COVID-19. Staying informed of the local vaccine status is very important and something everyone can do to help. Also, if you can help others without computer access stay informed and possibly register to receive the vaccine, that is another way you can help now or in the near future.

36. How do I decide if vaccination is the right choice for me and my family?

Feeling worried or hesitant is normal when something is new. Vaccination is a personal choice, and one that most Canadians agree is an important part of maintaining good health and for disease prevention. Please visit one of the following links for reliable resources to make an informed decision whether the COVID-19 vaccine is the right choice for you and your family: [Immunize Canada](#), [What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for Canada](#).

37. Why should I get vaccinated against COVID-19?

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread and reduce the impact of infectious diseases. Safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 are becoming available to protect us against COVID-19. While many people infected with COVID-19 experience only mild illness, others may get a severe illness or even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you are not considered to be at increased risk of severe complications. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience the illness itself.

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Precautions to take after receiving a vaccination

38. Will I need to continue wearing a mask after being vaccinated?

While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue practicing public health measures to help stop the spread of COVID-19 which means: covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often and never touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, staying at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from others and self-isolating when sick. Health care and other staff must still wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when working, even after they have been vaccinated.

39. Is it true that you can't get pregnant after receiving the vaccine?

There is currently no evidence to suggest that the COVID-19 vaccine would cause infertility or pregnancy loss. For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine in relation to planning a pregnancy, during pregnancy or while breastfeeding, please see the [Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada position statement](#).

Communications about vaccine rollout and timelines

40. What is the RCD COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Committee?

The Renfrew County and District (RCD) COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Committee is part of the RCD COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Governance Structure. As outlined in the [Vaccine Distribution and Administration Plan \(VDAP\)](#), the Renfrew County and District COVID-19 Vaccine Command Table is providing overall direction in the preparation, launch and operations of the COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign.

The RCD Communications Committee is comprised of representatives from local hospitals including Arnprior Regional Health (ARH), Deep River and District Hospital (DRRH), Pembroke Regional Hospital, (PRH), Renfrew Victoria Hospital (RVH), and St. Francis Memorial Hospital (SFMH) in addition to the County of Renfrew, Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre (RC VTAC), the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, Arnprior and District Family Health Team, and Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU).

Renfrew County and District COVID-19 Vaccine Communications
Committee

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For more information, visit www.rcdhu.com or call or call (613) 732-3629 or 1-800-267-1097

“Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District”

April 14, 2021

Renfrew County and District COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Committee

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Arnprior & District
Family Health Team

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