

COVID-19 Vaccine: Phase 2B and 2C

Key Messages:

- COVID-19 has affected every Albertan. Vaccines are safe, effective and save lives.
- As Alberta's vaccine supply is steadily increasing, we are preparing to immunize more Albertans who may be at risk from severe outcomes from COVID-19.
- In Phase 2B and 2C, Alberta continues to take a phased approach to protect those at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19, and those who interact with them, like health care workers and support staff.
- We expect to begin Phase 2B and 2C in April. Exact timing will depend on vaccine supply and will be announced closer to the start of each phase.
- The arrival of the vaccine does not mean the pandemic is over. For now, we all must continue to follow public health guidelines, including physical distancing, practicing good hand hygiene, masking when in public, and staying home when sick.

Phase 2B

- We are immunizing Albertans with underlying conditions as they are most at risk of severe outcomes.
 - A list of the associated underlying health conditions eligible under Phase 2B is available at [Alberta.ca](https://alberta.ca).
- We are acting on the advice of medical professionals to protect those most at risk.
 - These conditions were chosen as they are the ones that were associated with a higher risk of death or hospitalization for those under the age of 64.
 - The conditions included in Phase 2B were recommended by the Alberta Advisory Committee on Immunization and affirmed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- In Phase 2B, eligible Albertans with at least one of the underlying health conditions age 16 and older will be able to get the vaccine.
 - The age range has been dropped from 18 to 16 years of age as the Pfizer vaccine is licensed to immunize persons 16 years of age or older.
 - For Albertans requesting immunization for those 16 and 17 years of age, when booking your appointment, please verify your child will be receiving Pfizer vaccine. This vaccine is available at Alberta Health Services and pharmacies.
 - Albertans who will be 16 years of age this year must wait until they have turned 16 before accessing the Pfizer vaccine. Likewise, Albertans must be 18 years of age to be immunized with the Moderna or AstraZeneca vaccine at this time.

- This approach reflects the importance of protecting those most at risk of severe outcomes.
- Alberta will operate on the honour system. A doctor's note or other proof of an underlying condition will not be required.
 - Similar approaches are being adopted in Ontario and other provinces.
- Albertans may want to consult their health care provider prior to booking their appointment if they need clarification on whether or not their condition is on the list, but this is not required.

Phase 2C

- We will offer the vaccine to groups who are at high risk of experiencing severe outcomes, and Albertans who regularly come into contact with them.
- Phase 2C will offer the vaccine to:
 - Residents and staff linked to eligible congregate living settings: correctional facilities, homeless shelters, meatpacking plants, group homes including disability, mental health and other types of licensed supportive living.
 - Health-care workers providing direct and acute patient care who have a high potential for spread to high-risk individuals.
 - Caregivers of Albertans who are most at risk of severe outcomes.
- Workers eligible in this phase will need to provide personal identification that contains a birth date and proof of employment or professional registration (i.e., employee ID card, letter of employment or placement) when booking or attending their appointments with Alberta Health Services or at community pharmacies.

Residents and staff of congregate living sites (licensed/non-licensed)

- We are expanding the approach for shelters, correctional facilities and remand centers to include front line police, transport and court sheriffs who interact with residents at these facilities.
 - This is consistent with offering vaccine to staff in correctional facilities and shelters.
 - Front line policing staff regularly deal with individuals experiencing homelessness, and in transport of inmates who are an eligible population in this phase.
- We are also offering the vaccine to employees of meat packing plants as part of immunizing those in congregate settings.
 - There have been several large outbreaks in this sector and this will help protect these workers.

Health Care Workers

- We are offering the vaccine to health care workers caring for clinically vulnerable patients, as well as health care workers and office staff who deliver face-to-face care for patients, or have frequent contact with Albertans who are high-risk or are COVID positive.
- This includes physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists and all other health care professionals and their office or support staff.
 - For AHS, Covenant, Alberta Precision Labs and DynaLife, this will include anyone working in patient care facilities or providing services directly to clients in the community.
- First Nations healthcare workers on reserves and students undertaking their placement practicums in clinical areas are also eligible.

- This will ensure protection of the entire health system workforce given the critical services health care professionals deliver.

Caregivers

- We are offering the vaccine to all designated family support people of those individuals in long term care, designated supportive living and licensed supportive living facilities and up to two caregivers for children who have an eligible chronic condition.
- Health officials will work with licensed supportive living facilities, pharmacists, and primary care clinicians to notify and confirm eligibility of people in this group.