



**Last Update: Friday, March 12, 2021**  
 Answers within this document are based on the current information available. As the situation remains dynamic, please visit the [Government of Ontario's](https://www.ontario.ca/government) website for the latest updates.

The following questions were those most frequently asked by residents and Members of Council from January 4<sup>th</sup> to present regarding vaccine distribution. These FAQs will be updated as new details emerge from all levels of government.

***For answers to health related vaccine questions, please visit [Ottawa Public Health's COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs](#).***

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## Eligibility & Booking

### 1. Who is determining who can get a COVID-19 vaccine and when?

- a. 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.

The City's Emergency Operations Centre and Ottawa Public Health are doing everything possible to ensure Ottawa residents who want to receive the COVID-19 vaccine will be able to access it as quickly and efficiently as possible, dependent on vaccine supply and in alignment with the provincial framework. The total amount of vaccines that will be distributed to the City of Ottawa and precise delivery dates are not yet known. These decisions are made by the Province and subject to vaccine procurement from the federal government.

For the latest information, please refer to the following web page:  
**Government of Ontario: [Getting a COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario](#)**

### 2. Who is currently eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine? (\*Updated)

- a. The following groups are currently eligible to book an appointment to receive a COVID-19 vaccine:
  - Residents who were born in or before 1941, or who are adult recipients of chronic home care, and who live in the following communities are eligible to book an appointment to receive their vaccine through a pop-up clinic:
    - Emerald Woods
    - Heatherington
    - Ledbury
    - Heron Gate
    - Ridgemont
    - Riverview
    - Sawmill Creek
    - Bayshore-Belltown
    - Carson Grove-Carson Meadows
    - Greenboro East
    - Vanier South
    - Hawthorne Meadows
    - Hunt Club East – Western Community
    - Hunt Club Park
    - Lowertown
    - Manor Park
    - Overbrook-McArthur
    - Parkwood Hills
    - Sheffield Glen
    - Stewart Farm
    - Vanier North
  - Residents 90 and older (born in or before 1931) living anywhere in Ottawa are able to book an appointment to receive their vaccine at the Nepean Sportsplex community clinic.
  - First Nation, Inuit and Métis community members who are aged 50 and older. Please see [question #3](#) for additional details.

Patient-facing health care workers classified as “very high priority” (which includes most community-based doctors, dentists, nurse practitioners, midwives and physiotherapists) are able to visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca](https://ottawapublichealth.ca) to **pre-register** for a vaccination appointment. A definition of who is an **eligible patient-facing “very high priority” health care worker** is available through the Province of Ontario. Please help us keep phone lines open for those who are eligible to receive a vaccine - please do not call the booking line to pre-register.

To confirm that you are eligible for vaccination, **[please visit Ottawa Public Health’s COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Screening Tool](#)**. Only residents who meet the criteria will be vaccinated.

**3. What is the vaccination process for Indigenous individuals? (\*Updated)**

- a. First Nation, Inuit and Métis community members who are aged 50 and older are currently eligible for vaccination. Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team is providing vaccinations for Inuit. To book an appointment or for more information, call 613-740-0999.

Ottawa Public Health is partnering with [Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health](#) to provide a **[COVID-19 vaccination clinic](#)** for First Nation, Inuit and Métis community members aged 50+ at [St-Laurent Complex](#) located at 525 Côté Street. Call Ottawa Public Health at 613-691-5505 to book an appointment.

You will be asked to provide proof of Indigenous identity/status. Examples include:

- Status Card
- Inuit Beneficiary Card
- Métis Card
- 60s Scoop Acceptance Letter

For additional information, visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/IndigenousVaccine](https://ottawapublichealth.ca/IndigenousVaccine)

**4. How do I confirm my eligibility?**

- a. To confirm that you are eligible for vaccination, **[please visit Ottawa Public Health’s COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Screening Tool](#)**. Only residents who are eligible for vaccination based on the Province of Ontario’s phased approach will be able to book an appointment. Please help us keep phone lines open for those who are eligible to receive a vaccine - please do not call the booking line if you are not yet eligible.

**5. I have confirmed that I meet the eligibility criteria for vaccination. How do I book an appointment? (\*Updated)**

- a. If you have confirmed that you are eligible **[using OPH’s Vaccine Eligibility Screening Tool](#)**, or if you are booking an appointment for someone that is eligible, please call 613-691-5505 to make a reservation. Service providers can take your call between 7:30 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday, and 8:30 am to 4 pm Saturday and Sunday. Service is available in multiple languages.

We know that there is a high demand for these vaccines, so we expect a very high call volume for these bookings. If you cannot reach a call agent, you can leave a message and someone will call you back to book an appointment. Only eligible residents should call the COVID-19 vaccine booking phone line to make an appointment. Please help us keep phone lines open for those who are eligible to receive a vaccine. Please do not call 3-1-1 or the general Ottawa Public Health phone line, as appointments cannot be booked on these lines.

You will need an OHIP card or proof of age and proof of address to get your vaccination. If you do not have an OHIP card, proof of age and address could be identification like a driver's license or passport, and a bill with your postal code on it.

Walk-ins will not be accepted, so please call in advance to book your appointment if you have confirmed that you are eligible.

**6. I have tried calling the COVID-19 vaccine registration line but could not get through. What should I do? *\*(New)***

- a. The call-in booking system has been put in place to serve residents until a provincial online booking system is launched later this month. We know that there is a high demand for vaccines, so a high volume of calls is expected.

If you have confirmed you are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine using the online screening tool, operators can take your call between 7:30 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday, and 8:30 am to 4 pm Saturday and Sunday. Service is available in multiple languages.

When calling the booking line, callers will be put into a queue. Wait time is dependent on call volume. Please help us keep phone lines open for those who are eligible to receive a vaccine. **Only eligible residents should call the COVID-19 vaccine booking phone line to make an appointment.** Please do not call 3-1-1 or the general Ottawa Public Health phone line, as appointments cannot be booked on these lines.

**7. When will I be eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine, and who comes next in Ottawa?**

- a. The Province has started to roll out a three-phased [vaccine distribution implementation plan](#). All groups are identified by the provincial task force using the [ethical framework for COVID-19 vaccine distribution](#).

**Phase 1: high-risk population vaccination**

**Timing:** December 2020 to March 2021

**Immediate priorities for first doses include:**

- staff, essential caregivers and any residents that have not yet received a first dose in: long-term care homes, high-risk retirement homes, and First Nations elder care homes
- alternative level of care patients in hospitals who have a confirmed admission to a long-term care home, retirement home or other congregate care home for seniors
- health care workers identified as highest priority, followed by very high priority, in the [Ministry of Health's guidance on Health Care Worker Prioritization](#) (PDF)
- Indigenous adults in northern remote and higher risk communities (on-reserve and urban).

When all reasonable steps have been taken to complete first doses of the vaccine for all interested individuals in the immediate category, first doses will be available to the remainder of the Phase 1 populations. This includes:

- adults 80 years of age and older
- staff, residents and caregivers in retirement homes and other congregate care settings for seniors (for example, assisted living)
- health care workers identified as the high priority level in the [Ministry of Health's guidance on Health Care Worker Prioritization](#) (PDF)
- all Indigenous adults
- adult recipients of chronic home care

### **Phase 2: mass deliveries of vaccines**

**Timing:** April to July 2021, depending on availability of vaccines

The Province of Ontario has identified the following groups as part of Phase 2 of the rollout plan:

- older adults, beginning with those 79 years of age and decreasing in five-year increments over the course of the vaccine rollout
- people who live and work in high-risk congregate settings (for example, shelters, community living)
- frontline essential workers, including first responders, education workers and the food processing industry
- individuals with high-risk chronic conditions and their caregivers
- other populations and communities facing barriers related to the determinants of health across Ontario who are at greater COVID-19 risk

The provincial task force will use the [ethical framework](#) and the best available data to identify other priority populations within this phase, based on available vaccine supply.

### **Phase 3: steady state**

**Timing:** August 2021 and beyond, depending on availability of vaccines



Vaccines available widely across Ontario for anyone in the general population who wants to be immunized. The ethical framework, data and available vaccine supply will help to prioritize groups in this phase.

These timelines are subject to change subject to change and are dependent on possible additional vaccine approvals and supply. For more information on vaccine sequencing in Ottawa, please visit Ottawa Public Health's [website](#).

For the latest information, please refer to the following web page:  
**Government of Ontario: [Getting a COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario](#)**

**8. Is there a sign-up or eligibility that list I need to be on to get the vaccine?**

- a. At this time, there is no sign-up or waiting list. Eligibility is based on the Government of Ontario's three-phase distribution plan. The vaccine will be distributed to populations of highest priority and based on vaccine supply.

We know many people are anxious to be immunized for COVID-19, including those who are considered higher-risk or have other underlying health conditions. Please continue to follow all public health guidelines to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

As more information becomes available it will be posted to the [Province's COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario page](#).

**9. How will I be notified when it's my turn to get the vaccine?**

- a. Right now, vaccine supply is limited. As supply is expected to increase in the coming months, the City of Ottawa and Ottawa Public Health will be communicating through various media channels on who is eligible to present where for vaccination.

**10. I am an older adult, but I don't live in a long-term care or retirement home.**

**When can I be vaccinated against COVID-19? (\*Updated)**

- a. On February 14, 2021, the Province of Ontario provided updated direction on the sequencing of Phase 1 priority populations for COVID-19 vaccination. Adults aged 80 and over (not living in congregate homes for seniors) are now part of Phase 1 of the provincial rollout plan, once supply increases. Previously, these older adults were in Phase 2.

Given limited vaccine supply, immediate access to all residents in the Phase 1 population group is not possible. The City and Ottawa Public Health will undertake a phased approach, beginning with pop-up clinics in communities experiencing higher rates of COVID-19 transmission. For additional details on who is currently eligible to receive a vaccine, please see [question #2](#).

Older adults, beginning with those 79 years and older and decreasing in five-year increments over the course of the vaccine rollout, are expected to be offered

vaccines, depending on their availability, as part of Phase 2 of the Province's framework for prioritization.

For more information on the Province's three-phased [vaccine distribution implementation plan](#), please refer to question number 6.

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

- a. Frontline essential workers, including teachers and other education staff and food processing workers are expected to be offered vaccines in Phase 2 from April to August 2021. Specific timing will depend on the availability of vaccines, and the Province of Ontario is responsible for further defining the parameters of who is considered a frontline essential worker in the coming weeks. The Provincial task force will use the ethical framework and the best available data to identify other priority populations within this phase, based on available vaccine supply.

**12. My spouse and I are seniors that fall into separate age categories. Will we get vaccinated at the same time? (\*Updated)**

- a. Adults 80 years and older are part of Phase 1 of the provincial vaccine rollout plan. Adults 79 years of age and decreasing in five-year increments over the course of the vaccine rollout will begin in Phase 2.

As more information becomes available it will be posted to the [Province's COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario page](#).

**13. I am the essential care giver of a child who has special needs or health issues that puts them at risk. When can I expect to be vaccinated? (\*Updated)**

- a. The Province of Ontario has predefined teachers, other education staff, childcare and licensed foster care workers as essential workers under Phase 2 of the provincial vaccination roll-out plan.

As more information becomes available it will be posted to the [Province's COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario page](#).

**14. I am concerned that I am more at risk for COVID-19 due to a medical condition. When will I be able to receive the vaccine? \*(New)**

- a. Vaccine eligibility is based on the Government of Ontario's three-phase distribution plan. Individuals with high-risk chronic conditions and their caregivers currently are part of Phase 2 of this plan.

On March 5, 2020, the Province of Ontario identified that individuals with the health conditions listed below will be vaccinated in order of risk, with the highest-risk individuals being vaccinated first, followed by high-risk and at-risk individuals.



Highest-risk	High-risk	At-risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organ transplant recipients</li> <li>• Hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients</li> <li>• People with neurological diseases in which respiratory function may be compromised (e.g., motor neuron disease, myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis)</li> <li>• Haematological malignancy diagnosed less than 1 year ago</li> <li>• Kidney disease eGFR &lt; 30</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obesity (BMI &gt; 40)</li> <li>• Other treatments causing immunosuppression (e.g., chemotherapy, immunity-weakening medications)</li> <li>• Intellectual or developmental disabilities (e.g., Down Syndrome)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immune deficiencies / autoimmune disorders</li> <li>• Stroke / cerebrovascular disease</li> <li>• Dementia</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Liver disease</li> <li>• All other cancers</li> <li>• Respiratory diseases</li> <li>• Spleen problems</li> <li>• Heart disease</li> <li>• Hypertension with end organ damage</li> <li>• Diagnosis of mental disorder</li> <li>• Substance use disorders</li> <li>• Thalassemia</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> <li>• Immunocompromising health conditions</li> <li>• Other disabilities requiring direct support care in the community</li> </ul>

For more details, please visit The Government of Ontario's page: ["Populations Eligible for Phase Two COVID-19 Vaccination"](#)

**15. I am a health-care worker. How do I register for a vaccine appointment? \*(New)**

- a. If you are a patient-facing health care worker who is in the "very high priority" category, which includes most community-based doctors, dentists, nurse practitioners, midwives and physiotherapists, you can visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca](http://OttawaPublicHealth.ca) to pre-register for your vaccination appointment. You will be contacted with the details to get your appointment when it is your time in the vaccination sequencing. A definition of who is an [eligible patient-facing "very high priority" health care worker](#) is available through the Province of Ontario. **Please help us keep phone lines open for those who are eligible to receive a vaccine - please do not call the booking line to pre-register.**

**Vaccine Distribution, Logistics & Planning**

**16. Where will I be able to get vaccinated against COVID-19?**

- a. Various strategies will be used to distribute and administer vaccines across Ottawa, based on the quantity and type of vaccines received throughout 2021. The primary locations and strategies will include hospital clinics, community clinics, pharmacies, mobile vaccination teams, primary health care providers like family doctors and by other health care professionals such as nurses working in congregate living settings, including long-term care homes and shelters.

**17. Where will the community clinics be located? (\*Updated)**

- a. The City of Ottawa has identified the following locations for community clinics to administer vaccines:
- Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Avenue W.
  - Horticulture Building, 1525 Princess Patricia Way
  - Eva James Memorial Centre, 65 Stonehaven Drive
  - Ruddy Family YMCA-YWCA, 265 Centrum Boulevard
  - Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Avenue
  - Canterbury Recreation Complex, 2185 Arch Street
  - St-Laurent Complex, 525 Coté Street

Community vaccination clinics will open across the city after a provincial booking system is put into place and vaccine supply increases. Eligible residents will also be able to book at these locations at that time, so there will be many more opportunities to book an appointment. More information on the clinics and how to book will be available next week.

In addition to community clinics, mobile vaccination teams will continue to be deployed as needed to reach targeted populations, including rural residents. Pop-up clinics will also be set up at select sites for multiple days but are not permanent. They will be located in neighbourhoods experiencing higher rates of COVID-19 transmission.

**18. When will the community clinics open? (\*Updated)**

- a. Timelines for opening community clinics will depend on vaccine supply and community clinics will be opened incrementally as supply increases. Once fully operational, these community clinics will operate from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week and have the capacity to administer a total of nearly 11,000 immunizations per day.

**19. What transportation options are available to those eligible to receive a vaccine?**

- a. Residents who are eligible for vaccination are encouraged to make a transportation plan in advance of their appointment. This could include asking a family member or caregiver to provide you with a ride to your designated pop-up clinic. It could also include booking a ride with [Para Transpo](#) if you use this service. Para Transpo clients should use the Para Transpo COVID-19 Vaccination Trip Reservation telephone line at 613-842-3600. Customers will be able to book trips in advance by calling any day, seven days a week, between 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. We ask customers to schedule their COVID-19 vaccination appointment with OPH before booking a trip on Para Transpo.

If a transportation option is not available to you, you can request a ride to and from the clinic when you book your appointment. City partners will be able to assist with transportation for those who cannot make their own transportation plan.

Ottawa Community Transportation, a network of community partners, is providing transportation to and from the pop-up clinic. This service is free. COVID-19 protocols are in place to ensure the safety of the rider and the driver, and wearing a mask is mandatory. Ottawa Community Transportation will contact you directly to provide all the information.

**20. Do the various vaccine locations meet accessibility standards?**

- a. All sites are accessible, and accommodations will be made for residents who need help with accessibility. If you are a Para Transpo user, you can book a ride once you have confirmed your appointment location. If a transportation option is not available to you, you can request a ride to and from the clinic when you book your vaccine appointment.

**21. Will there be pop-up clinics for people who live in rural or remote areas?**

(\**Updated*)

- a. Yes - in addition to community clinics, pop-up clinics will be set-up to reach targeted populations in rural areas. These teams will be implemented as vaccine supply allows and the City of Ottawa is actively reviewing the next phase of pop-up clinics serving rural neighbourhoods.

## Vaccine Information & Safety

**22. Is getting the COVID-19 vaccine voluntary?**

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

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

- a. Feeling worried or hesitant is completely 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.

**24. Why should I get vaccinated against COVID-19?**

- a. 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.

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

- a. 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.

**26. What is the current status on dosing intervals and timing? \*(New)**

- a. The Province of Ontario recently extended the interval between the first and second dose of vaccines. The second dose can now be provided up to 16 weeks after the first dose. If you already have an appointment for your second dose, you will be contacted to reschedule. Exemptions for this change include the following groups, who will continue to receive vaccine at the initial intervals as described in the product monographs:
- 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.

### Other Questions

**27. How many people have been vaccinated for COVID-19 in Ottawa? \*(New)**

- a. For the latest information on COVID-19 data, including local vaccination statistics, please visit [Ottawa Public Health's Daily COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

**28. How are we engaging the community and specific groups like Indigenous, seniors, racialized communities?**

- a. Ottawa Public Health has established a local Vaccine Sequence Strategy Task Force to advise the City's Emergency Operations Centre on how to implement the sequence of vaccines given local context, including maximizing uptake among groups sequenced ahead of others. This Task Force includes representation from groups highly affected by COVID-19, such as newcomers, Indigenous, racialized people, older adults, and healthcare workers. The Vaccine Sequencing Task Force relies on the framework established by the Province of Ontario.

**29. What can I do now and how can I help?**

- a. It will be several months until a vaccine is available to the general public. In the meantime, 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 distancing, 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. Learn more about things you can do to reduce virus spread by following OPH on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. To keep up-to-date with the latest information, follow "[COVID Decoded](#)" with Dr. Trevor Arnason, on OPH's YouTube channel.

**30. What mental health resources are available to those feeling anxious about vaccine availability?**

- a. The COVID-19 situation can be very stressful. It is OK to not be OK.

If you are in crisis, please contact the [Mental Health Crisis Line](#) (24 hours a day/7

days a week) at 613-722-6914 or if outside Ottawa toll-free at 1-866-996-0991.

Please visit Ottawa Public Health's [Mental Health and COVID-19](#) page for an extensive list of resources, including a printable version of a [Mental Health and COVID-19 Resource List](#).

### More information & Links

- [Ottawa Public Health – COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [Vaccines Work- Myths about vaccines](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine safety](#)
- [Getting a COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario](#)