

Ontario Moving to Phase Two of COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan

Phase Two Supports Vaccine Rollout by Postal Code in "Hot Spot" Communities

April 6, 2021

[Office of the Premier](#)

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TORONTO — The Ontario government is moving into Phase Two of its COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan, with a focus on reaching individuals in "hot spot" communities where COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted certain neighbourhoods. In addition, this phase will prioritize individuals with the highest-risk health conditions in April 2021. With a steady supply of the COVID-19 vaccine expected from the federal government, over nine million Ontarians will be offered their first vaccination between April and end of June 2021.

Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Solicitor General Sylvia Jones.

"Thanks to the tireless efforts of our frontline health care workers, we are getting needles in arms as quickly as possible and have now administered over 2.6 million vaccines," said Premier Ford. "As soon as vaccines arrive our focus is turning to the communities hit hardest by COVID-19 and those with the highest-risk health conditions. With the extraordinary work of Team Ontario we aim to deliver over 9 million vaccinations across Ontario by the end of June."

Phase Two is focused on age and at-risk populations to prevent further death, hospitalization and transmission. To support this, Ontario is increasing vaccine allocations to COVID-19 "hot spot" communities across 13 public health units, targeting historic and ongoing areas with high rates of death, hospitalization and transmission. Delivering vaccines to people who live in these areas is critical to reducing the impact of COVID-19 as quickly as possible, and the Ministry of Health is working with public health units to ensure timely access to vaccines among the identified communities through all available vaccine delivery channels, including pharmacies, mass vaccination clinics, and mobile teams. The province is supporting regions to vaccinate individuals aged 50 and over by postal code in these COVID-19 hot spot zones.

In addition, starting as early as April 6, 2021, individuals with the following highest-risk health conditions will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination in Ontario:

- Organ transplant recipients;
- Hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients;
- People with neurological diseases in which respiratory function may be compromised (e.g., motor neuron disease, myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis);

- Haematological malignancy diagnosed less than one year ago;
- Kidney disease eGFR < 30; and
- Essential caregivers for individuals in the groups listed above.

Patients with the specific health conditions listed above, as well as their essential caregiver will be identified for vaccination due to an increased risk of serious illness and death from COVID-19, regardless of age. The province is expecting to reach the majority of this group through hospital clinics by the end of April 2021. Patients in the highest-risk clinical groups will be contacted by their health care providers to set up an appointment for a vaccination. The Ministry of Health is working with Ontario Health, as well as networks like the Ontario Renal Network and other clinical organizations and vaccination partners, to identify and vaccinate these patients and their caregivers as soon as possible.

"As we continue our fight against COVID-19, it is critical that we continue to ramp up capacity to protect our vulnerable populations and those with the highest-risk health conditions," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "While we have recently implemented a provincewide emergency brake to protect Ontarians and limit transmission, vaccines remain our best defense against COVID-19 and the variants. With more supply expected to arrive, we encourage everyone to sign up when it's their turn."

On March 15, Ontario launched its provincial booking system and call centre to support COVID-19 vaccination appointment bookings at mass immunization clinics. The system has already supported the immunization of other groups identified in Phase Two, including individuals aged 70 and over, with many public health units using the provincial booking system to offer appointments to individuals aged 60 and over beginning on April 7, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. Public health units that are currently not on the provincial booking system and wish to use the system will continue to be onboarded throughout the month.

Other groups that will become eligible to receive vaccines as part of Phase Two of the Ontario immunization program include:

- Individuals with specific health conditions which make them at high-risk or at-risk, as well as some primary caregivers;
- People who live and work in congregate settings and some primary caregivers; and,
- Certain workers who cannot work from home (e.g., elementary / secondary school staff, food manufacturing workers, high-risk and critical retail workers, and more).

Ontario continues to work with public health units to offer vaccines to remaining Phase One populations. Public health units have been directed to consider accessibility issues in their plans and have local solutions, as well as work with community partners to develop executive strategies to remove barriers to access and improve uptake in at-risk communities.

"As we begin Phase Two of our immunization rollout, we will first focus our efforts to protect those with the highest-risk health conditions and certain essential caregivers," said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. "Over the past year, Ontarians have made great sacrifices, and we can only stop the spread of COVID-19 through our continued collective actions. Please stay home unless absolutely necessary and follow public health measures."

Quick Facts

- As of April 5, 2021, at 8:00 p.m., over 2,621,000 vaccine doses have been administered across the province, with over 85 per cent of Ontario residents aged 80 and over having received at least one dose. More than two-thirds of residents aged 75 to 79 have now received their first shot. Over 322,000 Ontarians are fully immunized, including 92 per cent of long-term care residents.
- Individuals aged 70 and over continue to be eligible for vaccination during Phase Two, and in many public health units are already being vaccinated. Those eligible based on their age are strongly encouraged to schedule a vaccination appointment by visiting [Ontario.ca/bookvaccine](https://ontario.ca/bookvaccine), or by calling

the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line number at 1-833-943-3900. For general inquiries, individuals can call the Provincial Vaccine Information Line number at 1-888-999-6488. The Provincial Vaccine Booking Line and Information Line are open Monday to Sunday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and is capable of providing assistance in 300 languages.

- Pharmacies and primary care settings participating in the rollout have [extended COVID-19 vaccination booking to individuals aged 55 and over](#) as of April 3, with over 350 additional pharmacies and more primary care settings offering the AstraZeneca vaccine. This brings the total number of pharmacies offering the vaccine to nearly 700 and it is expected that this will reach approximately 1,500 in April.
 - Public health units and vaccination clinics have been directed to put in place processes to fill last-minute cancellations, “no-shows” and end-of-day remaining doses with people who are identified as priority populations by the province. This process may vary slightly by vaccination site so long as it is aligned with provincial priorities.
 - In March, Ontario received 1,454,310 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, the first shipment of 323,200 doses of the Moderna vaccine (225,600 doses delayed until April 3) and 194,500 doses of the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine. An additional 583,400 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine were received on April 1. In April, the province is expecting to receive 1,584,180 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, 751,500 doses of the Moderna vaccine and 122,900 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine. Every single vaccine dose received has been allocated to a waiting Ontarian who has booked an appointment through public health units, hospitals, primary care physicians, and over 700 pharmacies across Ontario.
 - Only COVID-19 vaccines that Health Canada determines to be safe and effective will be approved for use in Ontario. In alignment with updated NACI recommendations, Ontario will not use AstraZeneca vaccine for individuals under 55, while data is being reviewed by Health Canada.
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Additional Resources

- [Populations Eligible for Phase Two Vaccination](#)
 - [Guidance for Prioritization of Phase 2 Populations for COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
 - [Ontario Helping People Get their COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
 - [Ontario Ready to Rollout Phase Two of COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan](#)
 - For up-to-date information on the populations currently eligible for vaccination and instructions on how to book an appointment when you are eligible, visit Ontario’s [vaccine webpage](#).
 - Eligible individuals can schedule a vaccine appointment by visiting [Ontario.ca/bookvaccine](#), or by calling the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line number at 1-833-943-3900.
 - Individuals aged 55 and over can visit [ontario.ca/pharmacycovidvaccine](#) to find a participating pharmacy and can contact the pharmacy to make an appointment for COVID-19 vaccination.
 - For resources in multiple languages to help local communication efforts in responding to COVID-19, visit Ontario’s [COVID-19 communication resources webpage](#).
 - Visit Ontario’s [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect the people of Ontario from COVID-19.
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