



April 4, 2021

Dear Patients,

We know that vaccine guidelines have continued changing rapidly over the past few weeks. It can be hard to keep up-- for the public, as well as for medical professionals. On one hand, recent data shows that many eligible patients, including many elderly patients outside of long-term care facilities, have NOT yet received their shots. On the other hand, many of us who are quite eager to get vaccinated but are not yet eligible continue to anxiously await our turn. Once again, we ask that our community pulls together to assist those who might need assistance to book a vaccine appointment. At the same time, please respect the processes in place to roll out vaccines more widely, even if that does mean waiting patiently a little longer.

Over the coming weeks, vaccines will be available to more and more people, in more and more places. We will try to summarize below some current vaccine options of which we are aware, but please note that this is not an exhaustive list; options might vary depending on where you live. Likewise, it is entirely possible that by the time you get this email that the information contained within will no longer be up to date-- life moves pretty fast during the COVID vaccine rollout; be sure to look around for updates once in a while so you don't miss anything!

COVID NOTES

- **Get the first shot offered!:** We continue to encourage our patients to take the first vaccine made available to you. For updated information on the AstraZeneca vaccine, check [here](#).
- **No walk-in or standby appointments:** All vaccine clinics are by appointment only, with an exact supply of vaccine doses. Please do NOT show up at a vaccination clinic without a pre-booked appointment, as you will be turned away.
- **Stay safe!:** Once you do get vaccinated, please remember that it takes weeks for your immune system to develop good protection, so it remains very important to keep masking and distancing to keep yourself and those around you safe.
- **Long COVID:** [Answers to frequently asked questions](#) about prolonged illness after infection with COVID-19, also known as "long COVID".



VACCINE APPOINTMENT OPTIONS:

- **Ontario centralized booking system - Mass Vaccination Clinics**
 - Online: <http://www.ontario.ca/bookvaccine>
 - Phone: 1-833-943-3900
 - Current eligibility criteria:
 - 60 years old or older in 2021
 - 55-59 years old in 2021
 - First Nations, Métis and Inuit adults
 - Chronic home health care recipients
 - Assisted living, Retirement home, and First Nations Elder care home residents and staff
 - Essential caregivers for care home residents
 - Personal support workers
 - Front-line health care workers
- **Hospital immunization clinics (Toronto)**
 - Online: vaccineto.ca
 - Includes North York, Sunnybrook, Toronto East, UHN, Humber River, and more
 - While all clinics follow [provincial prioritization guidance](#) (as listed above), eligibility criteria may vary and/or be expanded at some locations. Check individual vaccination sites for details.
- **North Toronto OHT - Vaccine Clinic (@ Baycrest Arena - 160 Neptune Drive)**
 - Online: [Englemount-Lawrence COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic](#)
 - Criteria includes:
 - Adults 60+
 - Adults 50+ and living in a “hot spot” community (see below)
 - Individuals 18+ living with Highest-Risk and High-Risk health conditions (see eligibility on website)
- **City of Toronto - Mass Vaccination Clinics**
 - Online: <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/>
 - Criteria includes: 60 years old or older in 2021; [Phase 1 Eligibility](#)
- **COVID-19 pharmacy vaccine locations**
 - Online: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/vaccine-locations>
 - Criteria: 55 years old or older in 2021 (AstraZeneca)



- **Adults 50+ Living in Priority Areas**

- Adults born in 1971 or earlier living in priority areas may book vaccine appointments at the following locations, regardless of health condition:
 - [St. Joseph's Health Centre](#): postal codes beginning with M6K, M6N, M8V, M9A, M9B, M9C, M9R, M9V, M9W
 - [St. Michael's Hospital](#): postal codes beginning with M4X, M5A, M5B
 - [Michael Garron Hospital](#) (Toronto East General): postal codes beginning with M4H, M1L, M3C, M4A, M1K, M1M, M1J
 - [Humber River Hospital](#): addresses South of Steeles Ave, North of Eglinton Ave, East of Humber River/Islington Ave AND West of Bathurst St.
 - [Englemount-Lawrence COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic](#) - North Toronto: postal codes beginning with M2J, M2M, M2R, M3A, M3C, M3H, M3J, M3K, M3L, M3M, M3N, M4A, M4X, M5A, M5B, M5N, M6A, M6B, M6L, M6M, M9L, M9M, M9N, M9P
- [Scarborough COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic](#): Adults born in 1971 or earlier who live in Scarborough and have a health condition that places them at a higher risk (listed on the website)

PHASE 2 VACCINATION - HIGHER-RISK PATIENTS & CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITIONS

While [Phase 2 prioritization](#) for certain higher-risk patient populations has begun in some places, the approach thus far has been somewhat inconsistent. However, it is clear that the Phase 2 rollout has already begun in many places, and it is our hope and expectation that it will continue to expand further soon.

If you meet the eligibility criteria listed below*, we encourage you to register for a vaccine appointment: vaccineto.ca

- **Eligible HIGHEST-RISK Chronic Conditions:**

- Organ transplant recipients
- Hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients (ie. for blood cell cancers)
- People with neurologic diseases in which respiratory function may be compromised (eg. motor neuron disease/ALS, myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis)
- Hematological malignancy (blood cancer, eg. leukemia/lymphoma) diagnosed within the last year
- Kidney disease with estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) under 30



- **Eligible HIGH-RISK Chronic Conditions:**

- Obesity (BMI >40)
- Other treatments causing immunosuppression (eg. chemotherapy, immune-compromising medications)
- Intellectual or developmental disabilities (eg. Down Syndrome)

**Criteria might vary slightly from clinic to clinic. It is expected that Phase 2 will eventually include At-Risk conditions as well; check Ontario's [Phase 2 prioritization](#) (page 16) for details.*

Requests for Medical Notes: Our office has already been relatively inundated with requests for medical notes. While we respect that documentation may specifically be required at some locations, it is our understanding that most vaccine clinics will require a formal attestation from the patient confirming that they have the health condition in question, but NOT a formal letter from one's family doctor. The Ontario Medical Association has requested clarity from the government regarding this issue as well. **Unless a note is explicitly required for you to receive a vaccine, we ask that you refrain from requesting one from our office at this time.**

SHORTENED VACCINE INTERVALS - INDIVIDUALS EXEMPT FROM 16-WEEK DOSE INTERVAL

- The province has issued new guidance on providing second doses within shorter intervals for patients who qualify under specific conditions:
 - Recipients of solid organ transplants (eg. liver, kidney, lung, heart transplants)
 - Recipients of hematopoietic stem cell transplants (ie. blood cancers)
 - People receiving hemodialysis
 - People with malignant hematological conditions (blood cancers) undergoing active treatment
 - People with non-hematological malignant solid tumours undergoing active treatment (Active treatment is defined as chemotherapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy; not those receiving radiation or hormonal therapy alone)

These patients may be provided their second dose within a 21-28 day timeframe.

If you have received your first dose and meet the eligibility criteria above, you will need to contact the clinic where you received your first dose.

- Sunnybrook: [online form](#)
- North York General Hospital: email covid19vaccine@nygh.on.ca

Please do not email with queries about dose intervals if you do not meet the criteria for the groups outlines above.