



Feb 7, 2022

Dear Patients,

We're already one month into 2022– and approaching two full years of living with COVID-19. It's been a challenge, to be sure... But, like many of you, at Generations we are approaching the coming weeks and months with optimism that recent positive trends will continue– and that we will continue to be able to return closer to something better resembling normalcy!

As always, guidelines and recommendations relating to COVID-19 continue to evolve. Please see below for a number of recent and relevant updates.

### **UPDATE ON COVID-19 TREATMENTS**

Some of you have reached out asking about treatments for COVID-19. Here are some key things to know:

- Most people with COVID-19 symptoms will just need to self-isolate and rest, drink plenty of fluids and take over-the-counter treatments (eg. acetaminophen, ibuprofen) as needed for headaches or muscle aches. The resource “[Confused About COVID?](#)”, produced by Family Physicians at the University of Toronto, answers many of the most common questions about COVID-19 – including when to call the doctor's office.
- If you are over a certain age and/or have health problems, treatment may be an option for you based on your risk for severe illness. If you are at higher risk (see below) and have mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms, please call our office right away so we can determine whether you should be referred for treatment. Depending on the medication, they must be taken within 5-7 days of first symptoms. (See: [If I get COVID, is there a medication I can take?](#))

You can also self-refer to a Clinical Assessment Centre – list of CACs [here](#).

Higher-risk patients are:

- immunocompromised individuals (i.e., you have health conditions or take medications that weaken your immune system) and 18+ years old, regardless of vaccine status
- unvaccinated individuals aged 60 and over
- unvaccinated First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals aged 50 and over
- unvaccinated individuals age 50 and over with one or more risk factors (e.g., diabetes, obesity, serious kidney problems, intellectual disability,



cerebral palsy, sickle cell disease, on active cancer treatment, a solid organ or stem cell transplant recipient).

- Note: treatment may also be appropriate for higher-risk patients who are vaccinated – please call us if you are really not feeling well or are struggling to care for yourself at home.
- Call 9-1-1 if you have severe symptoms, such as: you are short of breath while resting or if you are finding it harder and harder to breathe, have severe chest pain, feeling confused or losing consciousness.

### **UPDATE ON COVID VACCINES**

New National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) guidance:

- **When to get a COVID vaccine after infection:**
  - Wait 8 weeks after infection before receiving dose 1 or 2.
  - Wait 3 months before receiving dose 3 (as long as dose 2 & 3 are separated by ~6 months)
- **Moderately to severely immunocompromised children 5-11 years old** - to receive three doses with an interval of 4-8 weeks between each dose
  - “Moderately to severely immunocompromised” includes: Active cancer treatment; Organ transplant recipient and/or taking immunosuppressive therapy; Moderate to severe primary immunodeficiency; Active treatment with significant immunosuppressive therapies
- **Adolescents 12-17 years old at higher risk for severe outcomes from COVID** - to receive a booster dose at an interval of 6 months or longer.
  - Higher risk includes those with underlying medical conditions (for immunocompromised, the booster would be dose 4), residents of congregate living settings, and/or belong to racialized or marginalized groups disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

**Pregnant or breastfeeding:** The Provincial Council on Maternal and Child Health has updated patient information on [COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant and breastfeeding people](#), including recommendation for booster doses.



## CLEARANCE NOTES

### Travel

- It is the traveller's responsibility to be aware of the requirements of their airline, destination country and transit countries.
- Note that for U.S. travel, a doctor's note is not required if the patient provides proof of a negative test result. [CDC information](#)
- If a "recovery note" is necessary following illness with COVID-19 and you were not directly assessed and/or tested through our office, our office will request the following information:
  - Type of test performed
  - Date & location of test
  - Date of completion of isolation period
  - Confirmation that you have no fever and symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms, eg. vomiting/diarrhea)

### For return to school/daycare/work:

- Doctors' notes are NOT required, and frequently place an unnecessary burden upon our office. The Ontario Medical Association (OMA) has updated its [attestation forms](#) which patients can use instead of doctor's notes.

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We are always here for you and will ensure you get the care you need, when you need it. However, our office (like most) is experiencing much higher patient calls and visits than usual given the care "backlog" from the pandemic. For some routine, non-urgent care (e.g., well child visits not associated with immunization, follow up for chronic disease that is stable), wait times for your appointment may be longer – we appreciate that you continue to be patient with us as we work hard to help you.