

HPMVAC update: March 11, 2021

Current Vaccination Status in Huron-Perth

- The province has indicated that vaccine supply has improved and that eligibility for first-doses can be expanded to other groups identified in Phase 1 of the three-phase provincial plan.
- Short-term vaccine supply will continue to be less than the number of eligible recipients in the Phase 1 population. Therefore, further regional prioritization is required.
- For Huron Perth, this is done at a regional level between Huron Perth Public Health, Middlesex London Health Unit and Southwestern Public Health.
- Pfizer-BioNTech is the COVID-19 vaccine available in the region currently.

Dosing intervals

- In keeping with provincial direction, Huron Perth Public Health will be extending the time interval for second doses of COVID-19 vaccines up to 16 weeks. This will allow more first doses to be administered.
- Due to this change, HPPH is cancelling second-dose appointments except for those who are exempt.
 - HPPH will share more information about booking second doses in the near future.
- The provincial transition to extend the interval between first and second dose came into effect March 10, 2021. The decision to extend the time interval for a second dose follows the recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Current evidence with the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines shows high vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease, hospitalization and death from COVID-19 for two months after the first dose, including among older populations.
- Not all second doses are being extended. The following groups will continue to receive their second dose of vaccine between 21 to 42 days:
 - 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;

Current eligibility

- Eligible groups continue to be:
 - Staff and essential caregivers in long-term care homes, retirement homes, and any residents of these settings that have not yet received a first dose of vaccine.
 - 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.
 - "Highest Priority" health care workers, followed by some "Very High Priority" health care workers.
 - Residents and staff in other congregate care settings for seniors, including assisted living facilities.
 - Adults aged 80 and older

- Indigenous adults aged 55 and older.
- The following groups have been **added** to eligibility:
 - Adults 16 years of age and older who are chronic home care recipients. *NEW*
 - Frontline healthcare workers in the following outpatient and ambulatory areas: *NEW*
 - Hospital-based outpatient clinics
 - Primary care, including walk-in clinics, community health centres, and nurse-practitioner-led clinics
 - Home and community care
 - Adult day programs for seniors
 - Community Based Specialty clinics, including medical and surgical specialties
 - Death investigation professionals
 - Dentistry
 - Gynecology/obstetrics, midwifery, and birth centres
 - Contract nursing agencies
 - Pharmacies
 - Assisted living, group homes, residential facilities, supportive housing
 - Correctional settings
 - Hospices and palliative care settings
 - Shelters
 - Laboratory services
- For a complete list of currently eligible groups, as well as soon-to-be-eligible groups, please see the March 10, 2021 MEMO: Update on Regional Prioritization of COVID-19 Vaccine
- The newly eligible groups announced this week will be onboarded to the HPPH booking system next week (the week of March 15).
 - This timeframe will allow HPPH to ensure appointments for remaining highest priority healthcare workers, as well as provide the proper outreach and support to the newly eligible groups.
 - HPPH and partners are increasing clinic capacity to meet the increased number of eligible groups.

Current Vaccination Activities

- Mobile clinics, with the support of partners, continue for facilities that can accommodate them.
- Community clinics continue across Huron-Perth. These are taking place in Goderich and Stratford, as well as rotating across other municipalities in Huron-Perth. Thank you to our municipal and primary care partners for your support in running these.
- Appointments for community clinics are being booked through an online and telephone booking system HPPH has set up, which will stay in place pending the activation of the provincial portal. The HPPH booking system will transition to the provincial portal in the near future.
 - Eligible health care workers will receive additional booking directions from their employer.
 - Clinic appointments fill up fast. We are adding more spots as quickly as we can.

Please Note

- Please **do not** call your primary care provider, or the pharmacy to book an appointment. Bookings are being completed at this time only by HPPH.
 - Please remember that vaccinations are only available to eligible groups.
 - Eligible healthcare workers and those connected to long-term care, retirement homes and other congregate settings will be contacted directly by a facility or through your employer.

- If you are 80 years of age or older, or an Indigenous adult 55 years of age or older, you need to contact the HPPH booking system at hpph.ca/vaccine or by calling 1-833-753-2098.
 - The Health Unit asks people to book their appointment online if they are able, or have a caregiver who can help them book online, since phone lines are very busy.
 - If you call, please listen to the recording. Please follow the prompts.
 - Several local agencies are assisting seniors to book online using the HPPH booking system. Contact the Community Support Services Network at 1-844-482-7800 to be connected to a local agency near you that can assist you. Through that number, accessible rides can also be scheduled where needed.
- **“Once eligible, always eligible”** Once HPPH announces that you are eligible for the vaccine, you are always eligible; you will not miss your chance to be vaccinated as there will be additional opportunities.
- Communications will go out widely to notify eligible candidates for Phases 2 and 3 when those phases are set to begin. Communications will include through our phone line’s vaccination status message as well as print, radio, website, social media and outreach from groups and organizations.
- Find the latest vaccination updates at hpph.ca/vaccines. To hear our regularly updated 24-7 vaccination status message, call HPPH at 888.221.2133 and select “1” for COVID VACCINE. Please listen to the whole message to receive all of the information.
- **Please remember that there will be enough vaccine for everyone.** Anyone who wants to be vaccinated will receive their opportunity to be vaccinated. We appreciate the enthusiasm and patience of those eager to receive COVID vaccine.
- Vaccine doses can be maximized through use of 1mL syringes. We ask our healthcare partners to consider using alternate syringe sizes where appropriate to preserve all 1mL syringes for vaccination purposes in our communities.

For More Information

Please visit www.hpph.ca/vaccine for more information, or contact your HPMVAC sector representative. The HPMVAC membership list is available at www.hpph.ca/vaccine. You can also call HPPH at 888.221.2133 for more information.

About HPMVAC

The Huron Perth COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Advisory Committee (HPMVAC) is a collaborative of multiple relevant sector stakeholder members from our Huron and Perth communities.

Under the leadership of Huron Perth Public Health, our table has been meeting to inform COVID-19 mass vaccination planning and operations for our communities.

This memo serves to update you, our community members and partners. Please note, guidance provided is tentative and subject to change. This reflects the evolving nature of COVID-19 and related supply chain logistics.