



What You Need to Know About Covid-19 Vaccine Roll Out

January 2021

General:

- The COVID-19 vaccine is free for anyone who wants it.
- The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) is the best source of [COVID-19 vaccine information](#) for BC residents.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, currently the vaccine approved for use by Health Canada, requires two doses spaced between [21-42 days apart](#).
- The Moderna vaccine is expected to be approved for use by Health Canada within the coming days and also requires two doses spread at least three weeks apart.
- Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are manufactured using [messenger RNA](#), or mRNA, based technology which uses a component of the virus DNA called messenger RNA. The messenger RNA 'instructs' the human body to make the specific spike protein of the virus which allows the immune system to better recognize the virus and respond more quickly if it were to enter the body.
- At present the AstraZeneca vaccine is undergoing Health Canada review and is likely to be approved for use in Q2 2021.
- It is still unclear how long immunity will last with the vaccine. According to Health Canada, studies for long-term immunity are promising but given this is a new vaccine, more research is required (and is ongoing) in this area but initial results for long term protection is thus far promising.
- COVID-19 vaccinations started in BC on December 15, 2020. On January 22, 2021, the province announced its province wide vaccine roll out (details noted below).
 - BC anticipates receiving 8.6 million doses of vaccine for 4.3 million eligible British Columbians between December 2020 and September 2021.
 - Children under 18 years of age are not included in the population group noted above.
 - Vaccine priority will be based on age and certain risk factors (please see Phases below for more information).
 - Age remains the greatest risk factor for severe COVID-19 illness and death.
 - The government of Canada remains committed to ensuring that any Canadian who wants to receive a vaccine will be able to do so by September of 2021.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is safe to use and has been shown to be highly effective.
- There are no mandatory vaccines in Canada.
- Immunization clinics will be made all over BC and will utilize large venues (arenas, community halls etc.). Mobile clinics will be utilized for some remote communities and for those who are home-bound and unable to travel to a clinic.
- In spite of the vaccine roll out, we **must** continue to utilize our layers of protection against COVID-19 (masks, hand washing, distancing, staying home when sick etc.).
- The province will enable those who wish to have a digital copy of their vaccine record. Paper copies will also be made available.



Phase 1 (December 2020-February 2021):

- As of January 2021, BC is in Phase 1 of the vaccine roll out strategy.
- Residents, staff and essential visitors in long-term care.
- Those waiting and assessed for long-term care.
- Health care workers for COVID-19 patients in settings such as intensive care and emergency departments.
- Indigenous people living in rural and remote communities.

Phase 2 (February-March 2021):

- Seniors age 80+ who have not yet received the vaccine.
- Indigenous seniors and Elders age 65+ not yet vaccinated.
- Additional Indigenous communities not yet vaccinated.
- Hospital staff, community GPs and medical specialists not yet immunized.
- Vulnerable populations on congregated settings (shelters for example).
- Staff in community home support care for seniors.

Phase 3 (April to June 2021):

- People aged 79-60 in five-year increments.
- People aged 16-69 who are defined as clinically vulnerable.
- Those who are clinically vulnerable are outlined in page 18 of [this report](#) but can be broken down to the following:
 - Transplant patients
 - People with certain types of cancers
 - People with severe respiratory illness/disease
 - Those on immunosuppression therapy
 - Adults with significant developmental delays (more information to come)
 - Dialysis patients
 - Pregnant women with significant heart disease
 - Those with significant neuromuscular conditions that require respiratory support
- Note, if additional vaccine becomes available people between 18-64 who are essential workers or who work in specific industries may be included in the latter stages of Phase 3.

Phase 4 (July-September 2021):

- People aged 59-18 in five-year increments.



Registration Process:

- In mid-late February 2021 Health Authorities will contact seniors over 80 and Indigenous seniors 65+ to provide information on pre-registration.
- In late February, BC will launch a campaign to inform residents in phase of the vaccination program.
- Pre-registration for those in phase 2 will open in March 2021.
- Pre-registration will help with supply management and will allow BC residents to do so two to four weeks before they are eligible to receive a vaccine.
- Pre-registration will occur either online or by phone.
- Additional updates on the registration process will be provided by the Government of BC in the coming weeks.

Side-Effects:

After receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, some people have reported side effects similar to those experienced after a flu shot. Common side effects reported include:

- Mild to moderate fatigue
- Pain and in some cases chills
- Headache or joint pain

These are all normal vaccine side effects and are nothing to be concerned about. While there have been more severe side effects these have not been commonly reported and have occurred in people with known, serious allergies.

Resources/Sources

- [BC's COVID Immunization Plan- January 2021](#)
- [BC Government](#)
- [BCCDC](#)
- [WHO COVID Vaccine Information](#)
- [Doctors of BC Vaccine Toolkit](#)