



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

March 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, the Moderna vaccine and the AstraZeneca vaccine are approved for use by Health Canada. Each requires two doses.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is undergoing Health Canada review and is pending approval for use at the time of writing.
- 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). On March 1, 2021 a subsequent news conference was held detailing Phase 2 of the vaccine roll-out (see below under Phase 2).
 - 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.
 - BC has committed to having every British Columbian who wants a vaccine to have a first dose by the end of July 2021.
 - 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.
- COVID-19 vaccines are safe to use and have been shown to be highly effective at preventing illness and/or preventing serious illness and death.
- 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.
- [Learn more](#) about COVID-19 vaccines.



Phase 1 (December 2020-February 2021):

- As of the end of February 2021, BC has completed the first stages of the vaccine roll out strategy.

This phase included:

- 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):

- As of March 1, 2021 BC has moved to Phase 2 of the vaccine roll out strategy. BC anticipates that 400,000 people will be immunized from March to mid-April and this includes seniors 80+, Indigenous elders age 65 and older, and people who live and work in independent living.
- Seniors in independent and assisted living, staff in independent or senior's supportive housing and home care support clients and staff will NOT need to book a vaccine appointment. Your health authority will reach out to you or your housing operator to book your appointment for you or organize a mobile clinic.
- Seniors born 1941 or earlier, Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) persons born in 1956 or earlier who do not live in independent living as well additional Indigenous community members not yet vaccinated you will have call to book a vaccine appointment over the phone. Details for how to do so can be found at on the [BC Government website](#) and will be available starting March 8, 2021.

Other priority groups with no call in required include during Phase 2 are:

- Hospital staff, community general practitioners (GPs) and medical specialists including nurse practitioners and community health nurses not immunized in Phase 1.
- Vulnerable populations living and working in select congregated settings.
- Staff in community home support and nursing services.

Phase 3 (April to June 2021):

- People aged 79 to 60, in five- year increments:
 - 79 to 75 (D1 April, D2 May)
 - 74 to 70 (D1 April/May, D2 May/June)
 - 69 to 65 (D1 May/June, D2 June/July)
 - 64 to 60 (D1 June, D2 July)
- People aged 69 to 16 who are [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) (D1 and D2 April/June)
- Those who are clinically vulnerable 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, as additional vaccine becomes available people between 18-64 who are essential workers or who work in specific industries may be included in earlier stages.

Phase 4 (July-September 2021):

People aged 59 to 18, in five-year increments:

- 59 to 55 (D1 July, D2 August)
- 54 to 50 (D1 July, D2 August)
- 49 to 45 (D1 July, D2 August)
- 44 to 40 (D1 July, D2 August)
- 39 to 35 (D1 July/August, D2 August/September)
- 34 to 30 (D1 August, D2 September)
- 29 to 25 (D1 August/September, D2 September)
- 24 to 18 (D1 and D2 September)

Registration Process:

- Registration for Phase 2 will open on March 8, 2021. **Details for how to do so can be found at on the [BC Government website](#).**
- Immunization clinics are being organized in 172 communities all over the province and will be overseen by local health authorities. Immunization clinics details will be available before [Phase 3](#) of B.C.'s Immunization Plan. The clinics will be held at large centres including:
 - School gymnasiums
 - Arenas
 - Convention halls
 - Community halls
 - Mobile clinics will be available for some rural communities and for people who are homebound due to mobility issues.
- The process to get immunized in phases 3 and 4 will happen in three steps.
 - Registration: Registration will happen through HealthConnect, an online registration system, or by phone. Registration will open late March 2021. Registration will not be available before this.
 - Book an appointment: Appointments will be available to book online or by phone. When booking a pre-screening questionnaire will be conducted and you will be asked to select a location/date and time.
 - On the day of your appointment you will complete a check in process, get your vaccine and will sit in observation for about 15 minutes after having your vaccine.
 - You'll be notified by email, text or phone when its time to book an appointment after your second dose.



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](#)

