

SIMCOE MUSKOKA COVID-19 GENERAL VACCINATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Last revised: March 29, 2021

Who can get the vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccine appointments are ONLY for those [eligible groups](#). We book appointments based on the availability of vaccine, which is subject to change. Do not drop into a local clinic unless you have an appointment. As vaccine supply increases, so too will appointments. We thank you for your patience.

Who should talk to their primary care provider before getting the vaccine?

Anyone looking for more information on the COVID-19 vaccine as it relates to their personal health situation is encouraged to discuss with their doctor. Anyone who fits into one of the following special patient groups should speak with their doctor ahead of booking their appointment to ensure the vaccine is right for them:

- Those who are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Those who have autoimmune conditions or are immunocompromised (due to disease or treatment)
- Those who have had a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis to a previous dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine or to any of its components.

For more information review [vaccination recommendations for special populations](#) and [the Pregnancy and Breastfeeding information sheet](#).

When can I get vaccinated?

We understand that many people want to know when they will be able to get the vaccine. Due to limited vaccine supply, we are currently vaccinating only PHASE 1 priority populations. It is expected to take well into April to immunize these groups. For information on the next groups to be immunized in Phase 2 and 3 see the [Ontario government's three-phased vaccine distribution implementation plan](#).

How will I know when it is my turn to get the vaccine?

Our [website](#) will be kept up to date with who is currently eligible to book their appointment. We will also use our local media to help us share this information. Please check regularly to see if it is your turn to book your appointment.

I am in an eligible group. How do I book my appointment at a community vaccination clinic?

Visit our [website](#) for information on who is eligible to pre-register and who is eligible to book an appointment directly in the provincial booking system.

When will I get my second dose, and how do I book that appointment? Ontario has moved to a 16-week interval between the first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. This is based on guidance from Canada's [National Advisory Committee on Immunizations](#) and aims to maximize the number of people benefiting from the strong protection provided by a first dose of the vaccine. We will provide details soon about how to book a new appointment for your second dose

Are there any other options for vaccinations besides the community clinics?

We are looking at all opportunities for vaccination, including mobile clinics, future drive thru locations and pop up clinics. For right now, the majority of the vaccine will be delivered at community clinics.

On Wednesday March 10, 2021, the province announced that primary care settings (such as family doctor offices) in select regions including Simcoe Muskoka will be providing the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to eligible Ontarians aged 60-64 (born between 1957-1961). This initiative will begin in, Simcoe-Muskoka, as of Saturday March 13, 2021. Health care providers will be contacting eligible clients directly to book an appointments.

Please do not contact your health care provider to request an appointment. At this time, vaccinations are not available at pharmacies within Simcoe Muskoka.

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Which COVID-19 vaccines are approved in Canada?

The following vaccines are approved in Canada. More information on each of the vaccines can be found on the linked webpages.

- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Janssen COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Are there checks and balances to make sure people don't jump the line when making their appointment?

When people show up for their appointment they are required to provide proof they belong to an eligible priority group (e.g. proof of age, profession, employment, essential caregiver status etc.) If they have booked an appointment and are not eligible, they will be turned away from the clinic.

When you arrive for your appointment, please [bring proof](#) so that we can confirm who you are and that you are part of a priority group.

If I can't get an appointment before the eligibility expands to include more groups, have I missed my opportunity to get an appointment?

No you can still make an appointment for your vaccination.

Why is the roll out of the vaccination so slow?

The roll out of the vaccination clinics is dependent upon the amount of the vaccine we receive. As more vaccine becomes available, clinics will ramp up and more appointments and options for getting your vaccination will be available.

Do I still have to practice public health measures like wearing a mask and physical distancing once I'm vaccinated?

Yes. Until a vaccine is widely available and a large percentage of the population becomes immune to COVID-19, we all have to continue to follow public health measures and rules for our region and continue to take everyday actions to help stop the spread of the virus. Why?

- While the vaccine(s) offers protection against COVID-19, there is not sufficient data yet on prevention of transmission.
- It takes time for a vaccine to develop its protective effects (i.e. a month or longer).
- We are still experiencing high COVID-19 infection rates, which has placed intense strain on our hospitals and health systems, as well as the health care workers who have been on the front lines of this crisis for many months.
- Not everyone will get the vaccine, meaning there will still be a risk of transmission.

For these reasons it is important that everyone, including those who have been vaccinated, continue to physical distance, wear a mask when physical distancing isn't possible or is unpredictable, and wash/sanitize our hands frequently.

What if I decide to wait?

If you are among a priority group, getting your first dose as soon as you are eligible will help protect you from COVID-19. COVID-19 can be a serious illness for many people and for some people the symptoms can last for months. Getting vaccinated is a safe and effective way to build protection against the virus.