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## COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #40

### COVID-19 Vaccine During Pregnancy, Additional Medications Eligible for Third Doses and Updated Routine Vaccination Guidance

**Attention:** Physicians, Emergency Departments, Hospital CEOs, Hospital Laboratories, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse and Nurse Practitioners, EMS, Designated Officers, Midwives, Family Health Teams, Pharmacies, Central LHIN, NSM LHIN, Beausoleil First Nation, Moose Deer Point First Nation, Rama First Nation, Wahta First Nation, Long-term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Hospices, Coroners, Funeral Directors, Dentists, Group Homes, Homes for Special Care, Optometrists, Corrections, Municipalities, Licensed Child Care Providers

**Date:** October 26, 2021

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#### The Importance of the COVID-19 Vaccine During Pregnancy

The province launched a campaign today to promote the importance of COVID-19 vaccination for those who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant and those who are breastfeeding.

As reported by the [Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table](#), while the rate of COVID-19 infection in pregnant individuals does not appear to be higher than the general population, pregnant individuals have higher morbidity and mortality, with a higher risk of ICU admission. They also have higher risk of pre-eclampsia, Cesarean delivery, and a higher rate of preterm birth. Accordingly, they are a high priority group for COVID-19 vaccination.

While there has been an improvement with vaccination rates among pregnant individuals over the last month, locally Simcoe Muskoka rates remain lower than the overall provincial average for this group. As of October 3, 2021, in Simcoe Muskoka 63% of pregnant individuals had received one dose and 54% are fully vaccinated. Provincially, 68% of pregnant individuals had received a first dose of the vaccine and 59.8% fully vaccinated.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC), the Provincial Council on Maternal and Child Health (PCMCH), and Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Kieran Moore, recommend all people who are pregnant, trying to become pregnant or breastfeeding receive the COVID-19 vaccine. There is increasing real world evidence of both efficacy and safety in these populations. The Better Outcomes Registry & Network (BORN) Ontario is evaluating COVID-19 vaccination in pregnant individuals

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in Ontario. BORN released an initial report, with data collected from December 14, 2020 to May 31, 2021, with preliminary results that do not suggest any pattern of increased risk for pregnancy (e.g. post-partum hemorrhage) or birth outcomes (e.g. stillbirth, preterm birth, Apgar score, small for gestational age) among vaccinated pregnant individuals. This, coupled with the increasing evidence of risk for those who contract COVID-19 during pregnancy, has led to recommendations that all pregnant individuals should have access to the vaccine.

Pregnant individuals should be offered the COVID-19 vaccination at any time during pregnancy provided they have no contraindications. It is recommended that you have ongoing conversations with pregnant women to help support their decision to be vaccinated and the following resources are available to support you with those conversations:

- SMDHU FAQs –[New: Planning a pregnancy? Are you pregnant? Recently pregnant?](#)
- Ask at Every Visit – [The 4A Model](#), [2A Model](#)
- Updated [PCMCH Patient Information Sheet on COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

The Ministry of Health is developing additional materials to promote the importance of the COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy, as follows:

- [COVID-19 Guidance: Labour, Delivery and Newborn Care – Ministry of Health - Version 3 – November 10, 2020](#)
- [Ontario.ca/covidvaccinepregnancy](#) / [Ontario.ca/vaccinocovidgrossesse](#)

Additional COVID-19 Vaccine in Pregnancy Information:

- [Maternal-Neonatal COVID-19 General Guideline – PCMCH - July 22, 2021](#)
- [Maternal-Neonatal COVID-19 Pregnancy Care Guideline – PCMCH – July 22, 2021](#)

### **Additional Medications Eligible for Third Doses**

The following medications have been added to the list of immunosuppressant medications for whom those taking are now eligible for third doses as per the Ministry [COVID-19 Third Dose Recommendation Guidance](#):

- secukinumab, ixekizumab, brodalumab, belimumab, vetolizumab

### **Updated Routine Immunization Guidance**

The Ministry of Health recently updated the [Guidance for Routine Immunization Services During COVID-19](#). The document includes a variety of catch-up schedules to support providing vaccinations to those whose vaccine series may have been impacted by the pandemic, and the program eligibility for the following vaccines have been extended:

### Adult vaccine

Vaccine	Current eligibility	Impacted cohort	Remains eligible for missed doses until	Special considerations
HZ (Shingrix)	65 to 70 years old	Seniors born in 1949, 1950 or 1951	Dec 31, 2022	

### School-based, grade 7 vaccines

Vaccine	Current eligibility	Impacted cohort	Remains eligible for missed doses until	Special considerations
Hep B (Recombivax or Engerix)	Grades 7 to 8	Grade 9 students in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 school years  (born in 2006 <sup>a</sup> or 2007)	Aug 31, 2022 (must complete series)	These vaccines are typically provided through school-based clinics; however, if health care providers have eligible patients requesting a vaccine, contact the local health unit for a special release access to administer the vaccine(s) directly.
HPV-9 (Gardasil 9)	Grades 7 to 12	Female students who graduated in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years (born in 2002 or 2003) <sup>b</sup>	Aug 31, 2022 (must complete series)	
Men-C-ACYW135 (Menactra)	Grades 7 to 12 and those born in or after 1997	N/A	Remains eligible until vaccine is received	

**For immunization program information, support materials and forms refer to our website**

[www.smdhu.org/pcportal](http://www.smdhu.org/pcportal) or call the Immunization program, Monday thru Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at 705-721-7520 or toll free 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8806.

### **Additional COVID-19 Vaccine Information**

For more information about the rollout of COVID-19 vaccine in our area, please refer to the SMDHU [COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunization](#) webpages.

For more information on the province's three-phased vaccine distribution implementation plan, please [visit COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario](#).

There are a number of COVID-19 resources and documents available through our Health Professional Portal at [www.smdhu.org/hpportal](http://www.smdhu.org/hpportal) as well as through [Public Health Ontario](#) and the [Government of Ontario](#).