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Spring 2026 Immunization Program Updates: COVID-19 Spring Doses for Some High-Risk, Older Adult RSV Program to Continue, Reporting Adverse Events Following Immunization with Chikungunya Vaccine

Attention: Physicians, Nurse and Nurse Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Family Health Teams, Ontario Health Teams, Infection Prevention & Control Practitioners, Long Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Indigenous Health Care & Community, Ontario Health Central

Date: April 7, 2026

Spring COVID-19 Vaccine Dose Recommended for Some High-Risk Groups

Administration of COVID-19 vaccine doses for Fall 2025-2026 has now ended effective March 31.

In accordance with [NACI recommendation](#) and the Ministry of Health [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#), an additional spring dose of COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for the following high-risk groups who are at increased risk COVID-19 disease:

- Adults 80 years and older
- Adult residents of long-term care homes and other congregate living settings for seniors
- Individuals 6 months of age and older who are [moderately to severely immunocompromised](#) (due to specific [underlying condition or treatment](#))
- Individuals 55 years and older who identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Metis and their non-Indigenous household members who are 55 years and older

Adults aged 65 to 79 years may also receive an additional dose in the spring, as some individuals in this age group are at increased risk of severe COVID-19 disease and would benefit from doses both in the Fall and Spring.

Individuals who are not included in these high-risk groups are not eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine in the Spring regardless of if dose(s) were received in the Fall. These individuals are recommended to wait until Fall 2026 to be vaccinated to ensure optimal protection against circulating strains at that time.

Those who are eligible for a Spring COVID-19 vaccine can access the vaccine now through local pharmacies. People are encouraged to call their local pharmacy ahead of time to ensure vaccine availability. Families of high-risk children under 5 years of age who are having difficulty accessing the vaccine through a local pharmacy can contact the health unit to book an appointment at a health unit immunization clinic.

View all current Public Health Alerts by visiting the Health Professional Resources page at:

<http://www.smdhu.org/PHA>

Receive urgent public health updates by email (such as Public Health Alert) by subscribing at: www.smdhu.org/PHAlert

Transition from COVAXON Decommissioning to Launch of Panorama Guided Workflow

As previously communicated, the Ministry has decommissioned COVAXON and is transitioning to a new system called Panorama Guided Workflow (PGW) which health care providers (HCPs) and pharmacies will be required to use to document COVID-19 vaccines once available in accordance with the COVID-19 Vaccination Reporting Act, 2021. All COVID-19 vaccine providers should have received communication about this transition from the Ministry of Health. For inquiries, please contact PanoramaGuidedWorkflow@ontario.ca. Until PGW is available, providers should document administered Spring doses of COVID-19 vaccine in their local documentation systems as with other vaccines and per professional standards.

HCPs, long term care homes and other health care facilities who have previously ordered COVID-19 vaccine from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) can now order COVID-19 vaccine for the Spring program using the [online Flu/RSV/COVID-19 Vaccine Order form](#).

Providers should conduct a clinical assessment with their clients to determine if they meet high-risk eligibility criteria for a Spring dose and to assess the client's COVID-19 immunization history. Clients should be encouraged to bring their COVID-19 immunization records to their appointment, if available, as HCPs do not currently have access to previous COVID-19 vaccine administration information.

COVID-19 Immunization Provider Support Line (CIPSL):

Starting April 7, 2026, the Ministry is launching a temporary contact centre for HCPs to support Spring COVID-19 immunization, called the COVID-19 Immunization Provider Support Line (CIPSL). This is for HCPs, including members of the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO), the Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP), or the College of Midwives of Ontario (CMO). If a client is unsure when they last had a COVID-19 vaccine and the HCP is unsure if the client has met the minimum interval between doses, the provider can call as needed to confirm the date of a client's last COVID-19 immunization.

CIPSL will be available Monday-Friday from 8:00AM-5:00PM at 416-849-9998 or toll-free at 1-888-333-0640. HCPs will be required to provide their professional registration number before information can be shared. Before calling, providers are asked to ensure their registration number is up to date on their college's website.

CIPSL agents will be able to search for client records with the following information: first name and last name; date of birth; and health card number, where available. If the search results need to be narrowed further, agents can also search with email address, postal code, and/or COVID ID (where there is no health card number). When contacting CIPSL, providers are asked to attempt to gather as many of these fields as possible to expedite the search process.

Note: CIPSL is for health-care providers only and not for the general public.

Older Adult RSV Vaccine Program to Continue

The Older Adult RSV vaccine program will continue throughout the Spring and Summer (i.e., year round), as evidence continues to demonstrate that a single dose of RSV vaccine provides longer term protection. Studies are ongoing to determine how long the protection lasts with a single dose of vaccine. Therefore, **vaccination of eligible older adults who have not yet been vaccinated for RSV can continue through the Spring and Summer months.**

The following groups continue to be eligible:

- Those 75 years and older
- Those 60–74 years and meet one of the following criteria:
 - resident of a long-term care home, Elder Care Lodge, or retirement home including similar settings (for example, co-located facilities)
 - patient in hospital receiving alternate level of care (ALC) including similar settings (for example, complex continuing care, hospital transitional programs)

- patient with glomerulonephritis (GN) who is moderately to severely immunocompromised
- patient receiving hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis
- recipient of solid organ or hematopoietic stem cell transplants
- individual who is homeless
- individual who identifies as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis

Anyone in these groups who has already received RSV vaccine is **not** to receive an additional dose.

HCPs, long term care homes and other health care facilities can continue to order RSV vaccine from the health unit using the [online Flu/RSV/COVID-19 Vaccine Order form](#).

Reporting Adverse Events Following Immunization with Chikungunya Live Attenuated Vaccine

There have been post-marketing reports of serious adverse events following immunization (AEFI) with Chikungunya Live Attenuated Vaccine (CHIK-LAV) in Europe, the United States, and Canada. While this vaccine is currently not publicly funded in Ontario, it is authorized for use in Canada and available through private sale. These reports have been mostly among persons 65 years or older and those with pre-existing health conditions. Reported serious adverse events have included hospitalizations with chikungunya-like illness and three deaths, including [one death](#) directly attributable to the vaccine. To support vaccine safety surveillance, health care providers are requested to report AEFIs for CHIK-LAV to their local public health unit as soon as a suspect AEFI is identified.

If you have any questions regarding the above information, please contact the Immunization Program at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 ext 8806.