



**PLEASE NOTE: Nova Scotia’s vaccine rollout is rapidly evolving. These FAQs are being updated on a consistent basis as things change.**

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## COVID-19 VACCINES

### **Who is eligible to book a vaccine appointment now?**

People 20 and older can book an appointment for the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

### [AstraZeneca Vaccine](#)

### **Why is Nova Scotia pausing the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine?**

The decision is based on an abundance of caution due to an observed increase in the rare blood clotting condition linked to this vaccine and because Nova Scotia has enough mRNA vaccine to immunize people age 40 and older.

### **I am scheduled to receive my first dose of AstraZeneca. What do I do now?**

Anyone who is scheduled to receive their first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine will receive an email cancelling their appointment. More information about second doses will be available soon.

### **What if I didn't use an email at the time of booking?**

Someone will call you directly to advise your appointment is cancelled.

### **What will happen with my second dose? Will I get AstraZeneca or another dose?**

A decision on second doses will be made once more information is received from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization. Nova Scotia's vaccine plan will be adjusted based on this guidance.

### **I received the AstraZeneca vaccine, what do I need to know?**

Anyone who receives the AstraZeneca vaccine should monitor for unusual reactions in the first 4 to 20 days and seek immediate medical attention in the unlikely event that they develop any of the following:

- shortness of breath
- chest pain
- leg swelling
- persistent abdominal pain
- sudden onset of severe or persistent worsening headaches or blurred vision and
- skin bruising, other than at the site of vaccination

### **My first dose of vaccine was AstraZeneca. I want a different second dose. How and when can I receive that?**

We are unable to provide or schedule a second dose of a different vaccine at this time. There is no scientific advice or recommendation from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization on the ability to mix and match vaccine types. We understand that this topic is being studied by researchers. When that evidence exists the vaccine program will be adjusted in response.

### [General Questions](#)

### **Do you only need one dose of the vaccine? Is it delivered via a needle?**



Health Canada has secured several brands of COVID-19 vaccine, but currently only the Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines are approved for use. These three brands are delivered through a needle into the muscle of the upper arm and they both require a second dose 4 months apart.

**Do you need a new vaccination every year, like the flu shot?**

At this time, it is unknown how long the protection will last. As vaccination rolls out, national groups will evaluate the data and provide an update how long the protection lasts and whether there may be a need for additional doses.

**Is there a fee for the vaccine?**

The vaccine is free to everyone who wants it.

**Will the vaccine be mandatory for anybody? What about healthcare workers and others who work in patient care?**

We strongly encourage everyone to get vaccinated to protect themselves, the people around them, and the people they care for. Vaccination is not mandatory for anybody.

**If I was already COVID-positive, will I still need the vaccine?**

Yes, you should get vaccinated.

**Can I pick the type of vaccine I want?**

The vaccine you receive will depend on a number of factors including your age and where you are eligible to receive it from. At this time, you can choose which vaccine based on eligibility, but as vaccine supply and vaccine brands increase, this may change and we cannot guarantee that Nova Scotians will be able to choose one vaccine over another.

**What is the difference between an mRNA vaccine and a viral-vector-based vaccine?**

Pfizer-BioNtech and Moderna are mRNA vaccines, which do not contain the COVID-19 virus. Instead, they teach our cells how to create the protein needed to trigger an immune response to protect against infection. The AstraZeneca vaccine is a viral-vector-based vaccine, which also does not use the virus that causes COVID-19, but a different, harmless virus that triggers an immune response.

**Why did you switch from 3 or 4 weeks for a second dose to 16 weeks?**

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization issued guidance that second doses of all COVID-19 vaccines currently approved for use in Canada can be offered at a 105 day interval. NACI's guidance is available at: [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\): Statements and publications - Canada.ca](#) Nova Scotia has adopted this recommendation because it will allow us to give very person who wants one a first dose by the end of June.

**Are the COVID-19 vaccines we have in Nova Scotia effective against the variant strains?**

Evidence suggests that the vaccines are effective against the main variant we are seeing in Nova Scotia: the UK variant. There is also evidence of some effectiveness against the South African variant, but we do not know enough about the Brazil variant yet.

All of that to say, the evidence also shows us that even if vaccination does not prevent you from getting the variant strain of the virus, it certainly limits the impact the virus has. People generally don't get as sick and the virus is less transmissible.



**I have heard of people getting vaccinated and still getting COVID-19. Do the vaccines not work?**

In Nova Scotia we have vaccines that are over 90% effective, but no vaccine is 100%. Some people who are vaccinated may still test positive for COVID-19. The vaccine helps to reduce the risk of severe illness or death. Often, this happens within two weeks of being vaccinated when people don't have full immunity to the virus or in people who have compromised immune systems and can't develop full immunity.

Health and Safety

**I have a health condition. Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Some people may not be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. More information is available at <http://www.nshealth.ca/covid-19-vaccine-information>. You should speak with your family doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist ahead of time to help you decide if you should receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Are there side effects of the vaccine? People in other countries are having serious adverse reactions.**

Like any medication, vaccines can cause side effects or reactions. The most common side effects from the COVID-19 vaccines are soreness, redness and swelling at the site of injection, headache, muscle pain, chills and joint pain. Swelling and tenderness around the armpit area is very common for those who receive the Moderna vaccine.

**What happens when someone has a serious adverse reaction?**

If you believe you are having an adverse reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine, you should speak to a healthcare provider or call 811. Healthcare providers in Nova Scotia are required by law to report certain adverse events following immunization to Public Health at the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

**Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?**

No. The vaccines currently approved or under review by Health Canada do not contain the virus. Therefore, they cannot give you COVID-19.

**If the vaccine cannot be given to anyone younger than 16, how will we protect our children?**

We know some groups will be unable to be vaccinated. It is important for those who can be immunized, to get immunized, to protect others. As more information about the use of vaccine in younger people becomes available from Health Canada, we will adjust our immunization efforts.

**How long does it take for the vaccine to provide protection or immunity?**

To provide appropriate immunity, you must have both doses of the vaccine.

**These are new vaccines that were rushed through approvals. Is it safe?**

Canada is recognized around the world for high standards for vaccine review, approvals, and monitoring systems.

Like all vaccines authorized for use in Canada, COVID-19 vaccines will be held to the same high safety, effectiveness, and quality standards. Only COVID-19 vaccines that meet those standards will be approved. Once a COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for use in Canada, Health Canada (the regulator) monitors its safety and effectiveness in individuals. Manufacturers are legally required to report specific adverse events to Health Canada. In addition, Nova Scotia provides safety reports nationally and there is



monitoring of all provinces' and territories' safety reports received across the country at the national level.

Health Canada only approves a vaccine if it is supported by robust scientific data and evidence. A similar process was used in 2009 to review and authorize the H1N1 pandemic vaccine. There is no reason to believe that the vaccine is not safe. Like other viruses, the best defence is vaccination.

**If I have an egg allergy can I get the vaccine?**

The COVID-19 vaccines that Nova Scotia currently has in the province (Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca) do not contain any egg proteins and none of these vaccines are contraindicated in egg allergy. It is important to have a conversation with your healthcare provider prior to receiving your vaccine to discuss your health status and specific health concerns.

[Vaccines and Public Health Measures](#)

**If I receive the vaccine does that mean I no longer have to wear a mask, physical distance or follow other public health measures?**

Anyone who has received a vaccine must continue to follow public health measures which includes wearing a mask, staying 2 metres/6 feet apart from others, practicing proper hand hygiene, following gathering limits, and staying home if unwell. When changes to public health measures are made they will be announced.

**I received my vaccine (both doses) in another province. Am I still required to isolate for 14 days when entering Nova Scotia?**

Yes. You will be required to self-isolate for 14 days even if you have received your vaccine. You will need to abide by all public health measures including wearing a mask, staying 2 metres/6 feet apart from others, practicing proper hand hygiene, following gathering limits, and staying home if unwell. It is important to remember that some people cannot be vaccinated. We all need to do our part to protect the people around us, as well as ourselves.

**Why are vaccinated people still required to follow public health measures? Isn't that the point of a vaccine?**

Although we know the vaccine is highly effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19, the vaccine needs to be studied further to make sure that people who have received it cannot transmit the virus asymptotically. Until the majority of Nova Scotians have been vaccinated, all residents and visitors in Nova Scotia are required to follow all public health measures.

**How long will we need to practice public health measures even though we have a vaccine?**

It is difficult to say. As more information becomes available from vaccine studies, guidance will be provided.

[CLINICS](#)

[Community Clinics](#)

**Who can access community clinics?**



At this time, Nova Scotians who are age 20 and older are able to book an appointment at a community clinic.

### **Can I book at any community clinic?**

Yes. You can book at any community-based clinic in the province. You must receive your first and second doses at the same clinic. Nova Scotians are encouraged to book at a clinic closest to home.

### **How many community clinics are there? Where are they?**

There are 10 community COVID-19 vaccination clinics across the province:

- IWK Health Centre, 5980 University Ave., Halifax
- Canada Games Complex (CBU) University Blvd., Sydney
- NSCC Truro, 36 Arthur St., Truro
- New Minas Baptist Church, 9453 Commercial St. New Minas
- St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish (Bloomfield Centre, MacKay Room 309)
- Multipurpose Centre, 6210 Young St. Halifax (Corner of Young St. and Windsor St. Enter clinic through the Young St. entrance)
- NSCC Burrigade, 372 Pleasant St., Yarmouth
- Amherst Centre Mall – Unit 205, 142 South Albion St., Amherst
- NSCC Lunenburg Campus, 75 High St., Bridgewater
- 39 Micmac Blvd. (next to Chapters beside Mic Mac Mall), Dartmouth

### **Why are there only 10 clinics?**

These clinic locations were chosen based on capacity to handle all vaccine types and to ensure that as many Nova Scotians as possible were within an hour of a clinic.

### **Will there be transportation provided to get to the clinic?**

The Government of Nova Scotia has partnered with the Rural Transportation Association to provide low-cost transportation for people who are not able to get to their appointment. If you need help with transportation, visit [Rural Rides](#) to find a local provider and book a ride for your vaccination appointment (rides are \$5 for a round trip).

If the Rural Transportation Association does not operate in your area, you will be responsible for your own transportation.

### **Are the community sites accessible?**

Yes. Accessibility was a requirement of site selection. If you use a wheelchair, walker cane etc., please bring them with you. If you need a wheelchair to help with longer distances, we will have a few onsite.

### **Why isn't there a community clinic in Pictou?**

Pictou County has been actively considered in the planning of the provincial COVID 19 immunization program. All communities across the province will have equitable access to vaccine over the coming few months. Nova Scotia will have several models of community delivery to ensure everyone has ready access to the vaccine. We are just at the start of the community access portion of our vaccine program and as a starting point, we have begun our community clinic rollout in 10 communities across the province. These clinic locations were chosen based on capacity to handle all vaccine types and ensuring that as many Nova Scotians as possible were within an hour of a clinic. Both the Antigonish and Truro clinics are within an hour of Pictou County, but we recognize that for some even that presents significant



challenges. As our vaccine supply increases, we will also be able to increase access through local pharmacies in the New Glasgow and Pictou area and will continue to evaluate community needs.

### **Why isn't there a community clinic in my community?**

We are just now starting to get larger amounts of vaccine. Over the next several months, every adult Nova Scotian will get an opportunity to get vaccinated in their community. Nova Scotia will have several models of community delivery to ensure everyone has ready access to the vaccine. This will include the existing community clinics, mobile clinic options and a network of pharmacies and doctor's offices across the province. By the end of March, we will have tested all models of delivery to work out the kinks and make sure we're ready to expand our rollout quickly.

### **First Nation and African Nova Scotian Clinics**

#### **What is the status of the First Nations clinics?**

Vaccination clinics in the 13 Mi'kmaw communities across the province are underway. They are being managed by the respective health centres in each of the 13 communities.

#### **Why did First Nations communities start immunizing people 55 and over?**

The decision to immunize starting at age 55 recognizes that Indigenous communities, due to the impacts of systemic racism, may experience disproportionate consequences as a result of infection. It also recognizes that Elders in the community play a very important role as holders of the language and knowledge keepers. For those reasons, we adjusted our age approach in Mi'kmaw communities.

#### **When will First Nations people under 55 receive the vaccine?**

The second phase of the vaccine rollout in First Nations communities started at the end of April and will continue into June in the 13 First Nations communities in Nova Scotia. The clinics will provide first doses for community members 16 and over who live in the communities and those 16 and over who live outside of the communities. The roll-out plan and timing differ from community to community based on factors such as the size of communities and other unique circumstances. Details are being shared with the communities.

#### **Will people who are Indigenous and from a community outside of Nova Scotia, but live here be able to get vaccinated?**

The Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre offered a clinic for Indigenous people who are 55 and over and live in the HRM area on April 23 and 24, and planning is underway for an upcoming clinic at the Friendship Centre. To find out more, you can contact the Friendship Centre directly. There are also community-based, pharmacy and primary care vaccine clinics in communities throughout the province. Right now, appointments are available for people 20 and over. More age groups will continue to become eligible to book appointments at these clinics. To find out more about who is eligible and book an appointment, go to [www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus/vaccine](http://www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus/vaccine) or call 1-833-797-7772.

#### **Are there vaccine clinics taking place in African Nova Scotian communities? When and where?**

To date, vaccine clinics have been held in a number of African Nova Scotian communities – in Cherry Brook for the Preston Township; in Upper Hammonds Plains for Upper Hammonds Plains, Lucasville, Beechville, and Cobequid Road communities; in north Dartmouth; in central Halifax; and in Guysborough County. Planning is underway for clinics in other African Nova Scotian communities in the province.



We continue to work closely with African Nova Scotian community leaders, including the Health Association of African Canadians and the Association of Black Social Workers, to support access to the vaccine in these communities and ensure it is offered in a culturally responsive way. More details will be shared with the communities where clinics will be held.

**Why are the vaccine clinics in African Nova Scotian communities starting with people 55 and over?**

We continue to work closely with African Nova Scotian community leaders, including the Health Association of African Canadians and the Association of Black Social Workers, to support access to the vaccine in these communities and ensure it is offered in a culturally responsive way.

The decision to immunize starting at age 55 recognizes that African Nova Scotians have been impacted significantly by systemic racism, therefore communities are disproportionately affected by the social and economic factors that influence people's health. Based on evidence from other jurisdictions, we know that Black communities often experience the adverse consequences of COVID-19 – regardless of age. For these reasons, we are adjusting our age approach in African Nova Scotian communities.

[Pharmacy Clinics](#)

**Can I get my vaccine from my pharmacy?**

Yes. Participating pharmacies are offering vaccine. When you go to book, you will see a list of pharmacies and the type of vaccine they have. You can book online at [novascotia.ca/vaccination](https://novascotia.ca/vaccination) or by phone: 1-833-797-7772.

**Why doesn't my pharmacy have vaccine yet?**

As vaccine supply increases so too will the number of pharmacies that will be offering vaccine.

[Physician Clinics](#)

**Can I get my vaccine from my doctor?**

Participating physicians are offering the vaccine. You can book at any clinic. When you go to book, you will see a list of pharmacies and the type of vaccine they have. You can book online at [novascotia.ca/vaccination](https://novascotia.ca/vaccination) or by phone: 1-833-797-7772.

**Why doesn't my physician have vaccine yet?**

As vaccine supply increases so too will the number of physicians that will be offering vaccine.

[VACCINE BOOKING/APPOINTMENTS](#)

[Booking Process](#)

**How do I book an appointment?**

There are two ways to book your vaccine. You can book online at [novascotia.ca/vaccination](https://novascotia.ca/vaccination) any time of day, or by phone toll-free at 1-833-797-7772 between 7am and 10pm, 7 days a week.

**Can I book an appointment for someone else?**

If your friend or family member needs assistance to book their appointment and consent, you can book on their behalf.



**When should I arrive to my appointment?**

Please give yourself enough time to get to the clinic site. We ask you try to arrive 10 minutes early. You will need to check in and will be asked COVID-19 screening questions before you get your vaccine.

**What do I do if I need to cancel my appointment?**

If you cannot make your appointment, cancel as soon as possible. If you booked online, you can cancel through your booking confirmation. If you booked by phone, call 1-833-797-7772.

**What do I need to bring to my appointment?**

- bring your Nova Scotia health card — to both appointments
- wear a mask — to both appointments
- wear a short-sleeve shirt or one with sleeves that are easy to roll up – at both appointments

**How do I cancel/reschedule my FIRST appointment?**

If you booked your appointment only and provided an email address you will receive a confirmation email. You can use that email to cancel or reschedule your first dose appointment. If you did not provide an email or booked by phone, you will need to call 1-833-797-7772 and an operator can cancel or reschedule your appointment.

**How do I cancel/reschedule my SECOND appointment?**

We are working on a process to cancel or reschedule second dose appointments. This is not currently an option. Second dose appointments are automatically booked with the first dose.

**I lost my confirmation email/don't remember my appointment details. How can I check my appointment?**

You can call 1-833-797-7772 and an operator can confirm your appointment details.

**I didn't receive a confirmation email. How do I get one?**

If you did not receive a confirmation email you can call 1-833-797-7772 and an operator can confirm your appointment time. You can ask they add an email to your profile if you have one.

**I am trying to reschedule my appointment and it won't let me. Why?**

If there are no future appointments available, you will not be able to reschedule your first dose appointment.

**What does Check Registry mean?**

This means that the information on your health card and what is on file in the system don't match. Try to enter the health card details exactly as it appears on the card. Please call 1-833-797-7772 and an operator will assist in booking your appointment.

**Is there a waitlist that I can go on to receive a notice or appointment when one becomes available?**

A central waitlist does not exist at this time given that appointment cancellations have been very low. If that changes, we will assess the possibility of a waitlist.

Some pharmacy clinics are maintaining last minute cancellation lists. You will need to contact a participating pharmacy to ask if this is an option.



**I heard that people are on a waitlist for vaccine and some are getting it before they are eligible based on age? Why are some people bumping the line?**

Measures to reduce vaccine wastage is part of the implementation plan for participating pharmacies. This includes maintaining last-minute cancellation waitlists.

These waitlists are to include people who are eligible to receive the vaccine based on age, but who do not have a scheduled appointment. Pharmacies who choose to maintain a list are to offer any extra doses at the end of the day to people on this list first.

If there is no one on the list, they may then offer it to pharmacy staff who are eligible under Phase 2 of the province's immunization plan.

If they have exhausted both of those options, they may offer the vaccine to anyone in the immediate area or within the pharmacy.

[Booking Issues/Common Complaints](#)

**Why are the number of appointments at each clinic limited or it says there are no appointments available?**

We know there is high demand for COVID-19 vaccines across the province. Given that we are still working with limited supply, we cannot provide vaccine to every clinic each time we get more. There is not enough.

Instead, we distribute vaccine according to age-based population estimates and we are rotating shipments between different parts of the province. This is why you may hear more vaccine has arrived, but don't see it available in a clinic in your area.

We also work within a two-week turnaround from the time a shipment is confirmed, to when it can be received, packaged and sent out to clinics, to when it lands in arms.

Vaccine appointments will be added to the system as supply is confirmed on an ongoing basis. Please check back regularly to see if new appointments have been posted.

**When will more appointments be added? Why can't you tell me now?**

We know there is high demand for COVID-19 vaccines across the province. Given that we are still working with limited supply, we cannot provide vaccine to every clinic each time we get more. There is not enough.

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### General Questions

#### **If we are a couple, both eligible, can we book appointments at the same time?**

Each person must book their own appointment. We cannot guarantee two appointments back to back will be available. If two spaces are available, you may book them.

#### **I can receive my vaccine now. My spouse has to wait a few months. Why can't we book together?**

Once you become eligible to receive the vaccine, you remain eligible. If you want to book with your spouse who will receive their vaccine later, you may wait until they become eligible and book at that time.

#### **Can I still book if I do not have a valid (or expired) Nova Scotia health card?**

If your health card is expired, or you do not have a Nova Scotia health card, you can still book your appointment by phone: 1-833-797-7772.

#### **Can I bring someone to my appointment if I need support?**

You may bring one support person to help you. They will **not** get the vaccine unless they are also eligible and have booked their own appointment. Your support person must wear a mask. They must feel well on the day of your appointment.

#### **Do I need to wear a mask at my appointment?**

Yes. You will need to wear a mask at all times while at your appointment.

#### **How long will my appointment take?**

It only takes a few minutes to give you the vaccine, but you will be asked to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting the vaccine. You may be asked to wait longer (up to 30 minutes) if there is concern about a possible allergic reaction to the vaccine.

#### **What if I am the substitute decision maker for someone who is getting the vaccine at this clinic? Do I need to bring proof of that status?**

Yes. Please bring documentation with you that proves your substitute decision maker status. You will be asked to provide informed consent on behalf of your loved one.

#### **Will I get a reminder of my appointments?**

If you booked your appointment and provided an email address you will receive a reminder 1 day before each of your appointments.

#### **Can I book ahead for when I am eligible in my age group?**

No. You cannot book until you are eligible in your age group. For example, if Nova Scotians age 80 and older are able to book appointments and you are 79, you must wait until the day you turn 80 before the system will let you book.



**Can I book a first and second dose at different locations?**

No. You must receive both doses at the same location. When you book your first dose, you will automatically be booked into your second dose appointment 4 months later, for the same day and time.

**Can I still get the vaccine if I am not feeling well the day of my appointment?**

If you are not feeling well the day of your appointment, please cancel. Do not come to the clinic. You will be screened at the appointment check in. You will be turned away if you:

- have been in a province outside of Nova Scotia and PEI in the past 14 days (or have been in close contact with someone from outside of these provinces in the past 14 days)
- have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 or is suspected of having COVID-19
- show signs of illness or symptoms of COVID-19, including:
  - fever (i.e. chills/sweats) or cough (new or worsening)Or two or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening):
  - sore throat
  - runny nose/nasal congestion
  - headache
  - shortness of breath/difficulty breathing

**When will more appointments be available online?**

Appointments are added as vaccine supply becomes available.

**Nova Scotians want a second dose sooner. Will you reduce the second dose interval?**

We have a plan to reduce the second dose interval for Nova Scotians in a phased approach, in a similar order as the first dose. This plan is based on our anticipated vaccine supply. Any change to supply may impact our ability to reduce the second dose interval.

**How will people know they can book a second dose sooner?**

Anyone who entered a valid email address at the time of booking their first dose, will receive an email with instructions on how to reschedule their second dose sooner.

**Will the system automatically pick the same time and location, or will they have a choice on when and where to reschedule?**

When invited to reschedule a second dose sooner, you can select any clinic in the province that has an available appointment.

**What about people who did not enter an email address at the time of booking or who have never received an email?**

If you did not provide an email at the time of booking or you did and have never received a confirmation or reminder email about your first dose appointment, you will need to call 1-833-797-7772 to add an email to your profile, or to ensure that the email on file is correct.

**Some people do not have access to technology or the ability to access email, how will they be notified?**

We know that not everyone may have access to email. They will keep their original second dose appointment. They may also ask a trusted family member or friend if they can include their email address and help them to reschedule the appointment online.



**Will people know ahead of time when they will be notified to reschedule? Will you announce it?**

We will publicly communicate when the next group will be able to book a second dose sooner.

**What will the new second dose interval be? Will it go back to the original 21 to 28 days?**

How much sooner you receive your second dose will depend on when your scheduled second dose is due. If your second dose is within the next 2 to 3 weeks for example, you may be able to move it up a week or two based on available appointments. If your second dose is in July, August or September, you will be able to book several weeks sooner based on when you receive your email to reschedule and available appointments.

**When will this process start?**

We will begin sending emails to those who are due for their second dose in the late May or early June.

**What about people who received the AstraZeneca vaccine? Are they included?**

The use of AstraZeneca is paused in Nova Scotia. We are waiting on guidance from the National Advisory Committee on Immunizations about the use of an mRNA vaccine as a second dose. Anyone who received a first dose of AstraZeneca will receive the same invitation when further direction on second doses for this group is available.

[VACCINE ROLLOUT](#)

**Why are you rolling vaccine out so slow?**

This is the biggest and most complex vaccination program our province has ever seen. Each time we get shipments, that vaccine is quickly rolled out across the province and in people's arms.

To ensure we had a second dose available for those who have received their first, we were originally holding back half of every shipment for a second dose. New guidelines from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization means we can now administer the second dose up to 16 weeks later so we do not need to hold a second dose, as we have been assured we will have consistent supply coming into the province.

Specific delivery dates have continued to change at short notice. To avoid being in a situation where appointments would need to be cancelled, the province has taken the approach of having the vaccine arrive in one week and planning for its use the following week. In this way, we have ensured that appointments for vaccination are always met.

As our supply ramps up, so will access to the vaccine. We currently have vaccine being delivered in community clinics, pharmacy clinics and physician clinics. There have also been clinics set up in each licenced long-term care facility across the province. We are on track to see every Nova Scotian who wants a vaccine able to get their first shot by the end of June.

The latest information on COVID-19 [vaccine doses administered](#) is available on our website.

**How will I know when it is time for me to get vaccinated?**

There will be a lot of communication as the vaccine rolls out to ensure Nova Scotians know when they may be able to get vaccinated. We ask everyone to please be patient and watch for updates.



### **Why is the vaccine being rolled out to Nova Scotians based on age?**

The greatest risk factor for COVID-19 patients is age. Those who are older are at the greatest risk of severe symptoms due to COVID. Nova Scotia's immunization program is focused on immunizing as many people, as quickly as possible, and protecting those at greatest risk. Making the vaccine available based on age is also the fastest and simplest way to get vaccine in arms.

### **When will I receive my second dose?**

Nova Scotians will receive their second dose 105 days after their first.

### **I received my first dose before the change in NACI guidance. Do I need to reschedule my second dose appointment?**

No. If you booked or received your first dose before the change in guidance, you will keep your original second dose appointment.

### **Why are you pushing the second dose to 16 weeks?**

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization issued guidance that second doses of all COVID-19 vaccines currently approved for use in Canada can be offered at a 105 day interval. NACI's guidance is available at: [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\): Statements and publications - Canada.ca](https://www.nacim.ca/Statements-and-publications-Canada.ca) Nova Scotia has adopted this recommendation because it will allow us to give very person who wants one a first dose by the end of June.

## Vaccine Eligibility and Phases

### **Who will receive the vaccine and when?**

The vaccine will be available throughout 3 phases. Those who are not eligible to receive the vaccine in phase 1 or 2 will receive the vaccine based on age. Most Nova Scotians will receive their vaccine by age group (groups are in five-year increments).

### **Who will receive the vaccine in Phase 1?**

The first phase of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 immunization plan focuses on:

- healthcare workers who work directly with patients in hospital or patients in their home
- people who work in long-term care facilities
- people who live in long-term care facilities and their designated caregivers
- people who live and work in Department of Community Services facilities like adult residential care centres and regional rehabilitation centres

Groups identified in Phase 1 will get an invitation to receive their vaccine in a healthcare or long-term care clinic.

### **Who will receive the vaccine in Phase 2?**

The second phase of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 immunization plan expands access to the vaccine and focuses on:

- anyone who works in a hospital and may come into contact with patients
- community healthcare providers, including medical doctors, nurses, dentists, dental hygienists, denturists, dental assistants, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who are licensed to practice



- people who live in large group settings (correctional facilities, shelters and temporary foreign worker housing) and those who work directly with them
- front-line police officers
- people who are 80 and older
- people who are 75 to 79

We are working with public health and facilities across the province to provide vaccine to those who have not been vaccinated, but are entering long-term care after clinics have ended. As soon as a process is in place, residents and their families will receive information from their facility on how to access vaccine.

### **Who will receive the vaccine in Phase 3?**

The third phase of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 immunization plan focuses on all Nova Scotians who did not receive the vaccine in earlier phases, including all professions and people with health conditions. Most Nova Scotians will be able to receive their vaccine during phase 3. In this phase, Nova Scotians can receive the vaccine by age group (groups are in five-year increments).

### **Non-Residents**

#### **Are international students eligible get vaccinated?**

International students in Nova Scotia can get vaccinated free of charge. When they can get vaccinated depends on the provincial rollout plan based on age.

#### **I am not a Nova Scotia resident (non-resident) but will be in the province. Can I get vaccinated?**

If you are from outside Nova Scotia you are able to receive a COVID-19 vaccine based on Nova Scotia's COVID-19 immunization plan.

When you become eligible, you will **NOT** be able to book online. You must book your appointment by phone by calling toll-free 1-833-797-7772.

#### **I received my first dose in another province. Can I get my second dose in Nova Scotia?**

If you require a second dose only because you have already received your first dose in another jurisdiction, please send an email to the Exceptions Team at [C19compassionate@novascotia.ca](mailto:C19compassionate@novascotia.ca) and include the following information:

1. Your name, email and phone number
2. The date, location and type of vaccine you received for your first dose
3. A copy of your official first dose immunization record

Your request will be reviewed by the Exceptions Team and you will be contacted directly with information about how to schedule your appointment. You must be eligible under Nova Scotia's vaccine plan to schedule your appointment.

#### **I only need my first dose because I will get my second dose in another province. How can I book a first dose only?**

If you require a first dose only because you will receive your second in another jurisdictions, please send an email to the Exceptions Team at [C19compassionate@novascotia.ca](mailto:C19compassionate@novascotia.ca) and include the following information:



1. Your name, email and phone number
2. Why you require a first dose only and your reason for not receiving your second dose in Nova Scotia.
3. Any documentation, if available (ie: job offer out of province, acceptance letter for attending university out of province, etc...)

Your request will be reviewed by the Exceptions Team and you will be contacted directly with information about how to schedule your appointment. Your eligibility and your appointment will be scheduled based on Nova Scotia's immunization plan.

**I received/will be receiving my first dose of vaccine in Nova Scotia but will be in another province for my second. How can I get my vaccine there?**

Provinces and territories are rolling out their vaccine plans on the basis of people getting both doses in the same places. We encourage people to try to make arrangements to get both doses in the same place.

We are unable to facilitate a second dose in another province. You will need to contact the province you will be visiting for information on how to obtain your second dose when there.

**Children between 12 and 15 can now receive the Pfizer vaccine. When will they be eligible?**

Health Canada approved the use of the Pfizer vaccine for anyone 12 and older. Nova Scotia will update the vaccine rollout based on this new information. This does not impact our rollout plans. Contingent on supply from the federal government, all Nova Scotians that want a vaccine will have their first dose by the end of June.

### Healthcare Workers

**I am a healthcare worker. How do I know when I will get vaccinated?**

Healthcare workers will hear from their employer when it is time to get vaccinated. If you have questions, you can contact your employer or NSHA occupational health.

**I am a healthcare worker who has received an email to book my appointment, but it does not work. Can you help?**

If you work for the NSHA please contact NSHA occupational health for support. If you are a healthcare and not an employee of the NSHA, please email [coronavirus@nshealth.ca](mailto:coronavirus@nshealth.ca) for support. They can direct your question to the appropriate contact.

**As healthcare workers, I believe that I, and/or my staff are eligible to receive the vaccine as part of Phase 2. How do we sign up for the vaccine?**

The province announced on March 2 that specific community healthcare providers who provide in-person patient care will soon be eligible to receive their vaccine. Information about that announcement is available at: <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20210302003>.

This includes and is limited to medical doctors, nurses, dentists, dental hygienists, denturists, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who are currently licensed to practice and dental assistants and continuing care assistants. If you and/or any of your staff are eligible under the above groups you/they





will receive a notice on how to book a vaccine appointment. We are working with the appropriate Colleges and regulatory bodies to identify all individuals who are eligible.

All other Nova Scotians who are not eligible under Phase 1 or 2 of our rollout plan (<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19-immunization-plan-overview-poster-en.pdf>) will receive their vaccine based on their age.

### Vaccine Access

#### **I have a family member in hospital who is eligible to receive their vaccine based on age but cannot leave. When will they receive the vaccine? Why are they not a priority?**

We know not everyone will be able to access vaccine in the community. Vaccinations for inpatients has started. We continue to encourage care providers to get immunized to better protect those they are caring for.

#### **I have a family member who lives at home but is bed ridden and cannot leave to receive the vaccine. Will they be able to receive the vaccine at home?**

For Nova Scotians who are unable to access a community clinic, we are working on an in-home approach to vaccination. More details will be available as planning progresses. In the meantime, it is important for friends and family of anyone unable to get out to a community clinic for the vaccine, to get vaccinated themselves. Doing so offers increased safety for everyone in that home from the virus and helps achieve population immunity. We continue to encourage all eligible Nova Scotians to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

#### **I work outside of the province on a regular basis. Am I considered a rotational worker under Phase 2 of the plan?**

The definition of a rotational worker is set out in the public health order which includes having a set work rotation. If you travel outside of the province for work, but not in a regular interval or rotation, you do not qualify.

#### **When will rotational workers/long-haul truckers/food processing plant employees receive a vaccine?**

Due to changes in the time between first and second doses (now 105 days later), several groups identified to receive the vaccine in the second phase will now receive their vaccine by age group.

These groups include:

- long-haul truck drivers and rotational workers
- people who are responsible for food security and can't maintain public health measures because of the nature of their work (like large food processing plants)

Moving these groups into the age-based rollout offers greater flexibility and faster access to vaccine in community, pharmacy and primary care clinics across the province.

#### **Can rotational workers leave isolation to get vaccinated?**

Rotational workers are permitted to leave isolation for urgent and routine medical appointments. If a rotational worker's vaccine appointment lands within their isolation period, they may leave to receive their vaccine as they would a routine medical appointment.



**When rotational workers are vaccinated, can they stop isolating like other Atlantic Canadian provinces?**

At this time, they must complete their modified form of self-isolation even after they have been vaccinated. However, we are looking into the policies in our neighbouring provinces.

**How can rotational workers book an appointment if they have to isolate for 14 days upon return?**

Rotational workers and their families can book a vaccine appointment. When you book your appointment online or by phone, you will be asked: In the last 14 days have you or anyone in your household travelled outside of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, or Prince Edward Island? If you meet the definition of a rotational worker (information is provided below that question to determine your eligibility) you will be instructed on how to answer in order to book your vaccine appointment.

**I have a disability/health condition. Why are you making me wait to get my vaccine?**

We certainly appreciate the concerns that people with underlying medical conditions have regarding when they may be eligible for COVID vaccine. However, we have developed our COVID immunization plan based on two key principles:

- Providing access to vaccine to as many people as possible in order to develop population immunity as quickly as possible, as this will protect the entire population regardless of whether they have received COVID 19 vaccine or not
- Sequencing eligibility for vaccine based on the main risk factor for severe disease, hospitalization and death, which is age

Making specific medical conditions or occupations a priority would result in a much slower building of population immunity and therefore, for the collective good of all Nova Scotians, we have chosen to follow an age-based approach to COVID vaccine eligibility.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization issued guidance that second doses of all COVID-19 vaccines currently approved for use in Canada can be offered at a 105 day interval. NACI's guidance is available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci.html>

**We are a private homecare provider. How and when do we access the vaccine? [Note: AFTER responding forward email to Kim Silver as FYI]**

We are still working to confirm logistics with the vaccination team. We want to assure you that Parkwood Home Care is on our radar.

We will follow up with more information as soon as available, and will be looking for more information from you at that time to help us determine eligibility criteria and coordinate logistics with the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

[Licensed Long-Term Care, Residential Care and Private Facilities](#)

**Why are residents of private/unlicensed senior living facilities not able to get their COVID-19 vaccine on-site? They are just as vulnerable as those who live in long-term care facilities.**

These facilities will receive their first dose vaccine shipments by the end of April. This rollout is in partnership with pharmacies in their communities. Please contact your facility for more details.



**How will residents, staff and designated caregivers receive the vaccine?**

Licensed long-term care facilities across the province will receive COVID-19 vaccine to host on-site clinics for residents and designated caregivers. Staff will be booked as part of healthcare worker clinics.

**Will residents in residential care facilities be offered the vaccine on-site and when?**

It is our intent to ensure residents of residential care facilities have access to the COVID-19 vaccine as quickly as possible. Residents who live in Residential Care Facilities are able to receive the vaccine through community clinics when they become eligible based on age. We continue to work with Public Health on ways for residents of residential care facilities to get the vaccine. The province is also working to deliver vaccine through pharmacies. When this model of delivery is in place, this may be another way for residents receiving their vaccine closer to home.

**I received my first dose in the community and now am in licensed long-term care. How do I receive my second dose?**

We are working with licensed facilities to provide access to second doses for residents who received their first dose in the community. Please speak with your facility about how you can access your second dose.

**I was recently admitted to a licensed long-term care facility but have not received my vaccine yet. The facility is no longer hosting a vaccination clinic. How do I get vaccinated?**

We are working with licensed facilities to provide access to vaccine for residents who have recently been admitted. Please speak with your facility about how you can access your vaccine.

**I live in a private/unlicensed facility and received my first dose in the community, but the facility is now offering vaccine. Can I receive my second dose here?**

You will need to receive your second dose at the same location you received your first dose. Private facilities have already submitted their dosage allocation to the province. This allocation cannot be changed. If your facility has any leftover doses due to missed or cancelled appointments, you may be able to access one for your second dose if:

- The facility is willing to do this
- The vaccine is the same type as your first dose
- You can provide proof that you have received your first dose and the type of vaccine you have received

**My family member recently went into a licensed long-term care facility. The facility has completed its clinic for COVID-19. How do I get them vaccinated?**

We are working with public health and facilities across the province to provide vaccine to those who have not been vaccinated but are entering long-term care after clinics have ended. As soon as a process is in place, residents and their families will receive information from their facility on how to access vaccine.

**My family member had dose 1 in the community but now needs dose 2 in a private, unlicensed facility. How do I get them vaccinated?**

If dose 1 was received in a community clinic then dose 2 must be received at the same place. Vaccine allotments for residents in facilities across the province have already been determined and submitted by facilities to the province. This cannot be changed.



However, you can speak with the facility manager to see if there are any extra doses at the time they are administering second doses. As long as the vaccine they are providing is the same brand as the one your mother received, they can give her the leftover dose. They will likely not know until the day they are administering the second doses. If this is an option, please cancel any other COVID-19 vaccine appointments.

**What about residents who live in seniors' apartments. When will we receive the vaccine?**

The province's immunization plan provided for vaccine access to long-term care facilities where there was a recognition that many seniors in these facilities are non-ambulatory which would prevent them from being able to leave their residence to access a community clinic. Given the relatively independent nature of seniors' apartment residences, we assume these residents have the mobility necessary to attend one of the many available community clinics and as such, an on-site clinic would be unnecessary for these residents.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

**Will I get a record of immunization?**

Yes. If you provide an email at the time of booking, you will receive a receipt that you have received your COVID-19 vaccine. If you do not have an email address, a paper record will be provided.

**Can I register my immunization from out of province in Nova Scotia?**

You can provide public health your immunization record which will be recorded and counted toward the number of Nova Scotia residents who have been immunized.

**I did not receive/lost my vaccination record. How do I get another?**

We cannot access or provide that record to you through this email. Your record is with the Nova Scotia Health Authority. In order to access an immunization record, you will need to make a records request through your local public health office. Here is the link to the immunization records request page at the NSHA, which has a link to the public health offices across the province: <http://www.nshealth.ca/service-details/immunization%20Records%20Request> Please contact your local office and someone will help walk you through the process.

**I tested positive for COVID-19. How long do I have to wait until I can get my COVID-19 vaccine?**

As soon as you are recovered you can schedule your COVID-19 vaccine.

**Do children/youth need parental/guardian consent to receive their COVID-19 vaccine?**

Nova Scotia does not have a minimum age for giving consent for healthcare decisions. It is recommended that parents or guardians and their children discuss consent for COVID-19 immunization. However, parental/guardian consent is not required for mature minors and consent given by mature minors cannot be overturned by parents or guardians. A mature minor is a person under the age of 19 who is able to understand the purpose of the immunization, the benefits and possible reactions of the COVID-19 vaccine and the risk of not getting immunized. Mature minors can legally book an appointment and consent to or refuse immunizations. In order to be considered a mature minor the immunization provider must assess the youth's ability to consent and ability to understand the



information given. If the youth is assessed as being unable to give informed consent, a substitute decision maker must be involved, for example, a parent or guardian.