

IMPORTANT UPDATES ON COVID-19

To: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses, and Midwives
Hospital Infection Control Departments and Emergency Departments

Updated information on the symptom reference document, Directives 2 & 6, vaccination updates as well as a draft risk assessment tool are included in this alert.

1. [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms \(v.9.0, January 4, 2022\)](#) / [French version](#)

2. **Vaccination Updates**

Pregnant Individuals

Pregnant individuals are recommended to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and are also recommended to receive a booster dose. Pregnant women in Ontario are eligible to receive their booster dose at three months after their last dose. We know that vaccine uptake among those who are pregnant is not as high as in other populations, despite their risk for severe illness if infected with COVID-19.

We are asking clinicians caring for pregnant women to strongly encourage their patients to get vaccinated, including their booster dose, to prevent risk of severe outcomes with Omicron.

Medical Exemptions

Guidance for medical exemptions has been released. ([EN/FR](#)). Please review the document for conditions deemed eligible for exemption.

Timiskaming Health Unit is responsible for validating and entering true medical exemptions into COVax for generation of QR codes. You may be contacted if a patient presents with a medical exemption requiring further validation or information before verification and COVax entry.

Sample form can be found here: [EN/FR](#)

Note: Referral and specialist consultation support for physicians and nurse practitioners is available through [Ontario's eConsult Service](#), OTN Hub, and the [Special Immunization Clinic \(SIC\) Network](#). In many instances, safe administration of subsequent doses of COVID-19 vaccine is possible under the management of an appropriate physician or nurse practitioner. True medical exemptions are expected to be infrequent and should be supported by expert consultation.

3. **Risk Assessment Tool for Critical Staff Shortages** (Attached)

This tool can be used when considering extreme surges of COVID-19 cases and contacts, highest risk settings may need to implement strategies during critical staffing shortages to meet critical workforce needs.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local Timiskaming Health Unit:

Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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