

IMPORTANT UPDATES ON COVID-19

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

Important updates on the COVID-19 vaccine and COVID-19 Screening Form are included in this alert.

Changes to second dose intervals

The province is following recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) to extend the time interval of the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines up to **16 weeks**. This will allow more individuals that can benefit from a first dose of vaccine, especially due to the limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine. This change is also consistent with other vaccine schedules in that a longer interval between doses is generally beneficial for extending immunity.

This 16-week interval for the second dose applies to the three two-dose vaccines currently approved by Health Canada (Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD).

The following groups will continue to receive vaccine at the initial intervals as described in the product monographs:

- residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges and Assisted Living facilities who are at the greatest risk of both exposure to COVID-19 and serious illness and death; and,
- remote and isolated First Nation communities (currently supported by Operation Remote Immunity). Further discussion on dosage intervals for administering to the Indigenous population beyond Operation Remote Immunity will occur.

Please note, the second dose interval and eligibility is dictated by the province and is reflected in our vaccine allotment so THU cannot go outside the Chief Medical Officer's direction.

Areas of Focus for Phase 2 Vaccinations

Phase 2 of the province's vaccination rollout is expected to begin in April 2021, depending on vaccine availability. The target populations in Phase 2 are based on *age and risk* in order to prevent further death, hospitalization and transmission of COVID-19.

Vaccines will be offered to those in the following groups:

- Adults aged 60-79, beginning with those 75 years of age and older, and decreasing in five-year increments over the course of the vaccine rollout;

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.

New Liskeard

Tel: (705) 647-4305
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HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ALERT

March 11, 2021

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- People who live and/or work in high-risk congregate settings (e.g. shelters, community living) as well as some primary caregivers;
- Individuals with high-risk chronic health conditions and some primary caregivers of those with highest risk health conditions;
- People who live in hot spots with high rates of death, hospitalizations and transmission of infection;
- Certain workers who cannot work from home, including but not limited to first responders, education workers and those in the food processing industry.

Please note, we anticipate working closely again with our primary care partners to identify and vaccinate those with high-risk chronic conditions.

Updated COVID-19 Screening Form

The attached form has been updated to include:

- Rapid Antigen testing
- Point of Care testing result (if available)
- School/childcare attendance