HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ALERT
October 13, 2021

Services de santé du TIMISKAMING Health Unit

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
Toll Free: (866) 747-4305
Fax: (705) 647-5779

Kirkland Lake
Tel: (705) 567-9355
Toll Free: (866) 967-9355
Fax: (705) 567-5476

After-Hours or Weekend On-Call Number
(705) 647-3033

www.timiskaminghu.com

IMPORTANT UPDATES ON COVID-19

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

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Additional Populations and Medications Eligible for Third Doses

Individuals with the following health conditions are now eligible for third doses in Ontario:

- Individuals receiving active treatment (e.g., chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy) for solid tumour or hematologic malignancies.
- Recipients of solid-organ transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy.
- Recipients of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy or hematopoietic stem cell transplant (within 2 years of transplantation or taking immunosuppression therapy).
- Individuals with moderate to severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g., DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome).
- Individuals with stage 3 or advanced untreated HIV infection and those with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.
- Individuals receiving active treatment with the following categories of immunosuppressive therapies: anti-B cell therapies (monoclonal antibodies targeting CD19, CD20 and CD22), high-dose systemic corticosteroids, alkylating agents, antimetabolites, or tumor-necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors and other biologic agents that are significantly immunosuppressive.

Individuals being prescribed one of the eligible medications in **Table 1**, EN/FR (Table 1 also included as an attachment) can bring a copy of their prescription to any THU COVID-19 vaccination clinic and do not need a separate referral form.

Ontario Maintaining 5-month Interval Between 2nd and 3rd COVID vaccine for Select Populations

Residents of LTCHs, RHs, and elderly living in other congregate settings should receive their third dose five months/20 weeks after receiving their second dose. For those with medical conditions, the interval remains two months/eight weeks.

Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFIs) for COVID-19 in the Timiskaming Health Unit District

This data summary provides a snapshot of adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) that are temporally associated with receipt of COVID-19 vaccine and meet the provincial surveillance definitions (i.e., confirmed). AEFIs described in this summary are defined as any untoward medical occurrences that followed immunization and do not necessarily have a causal relationship with the vaccine.

Background
In Ontario, physicians, nurses or pharmacists are mandated to report all Adverse Events Following Immunizations (AEFIs) to their local public health unit (PHU) for all vaccines available for use in Canada (Section 38 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act). Following the

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authorization of novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccines in Canada, surveillance is being conducted to monitor their safety.

PHUs investigate and assess all AEFI reports, which are then entered into the provincial electronic reporting system according to provincial guidelines. Public Health Ontario (PHO) conducts provincial surveillance of AEFIs and provides advice and support for local PHUs in the investigation and management of AEFI reports.

All provincially reported AEFIs that meet the confirmed case definition are reported by PHO to the Canadian Adverse Events Following Immunization Surveillance System (CAEFISS) at the Public Health Agency of Canada.

For more information visit:

- Public Health Ontario Immunization Vaccine-Safety / FR
- Public Health Ontario_ Novel-coronavirus/vaccines / FR
- Public Health Ontario_Epi_Covid-19_AEFI Report
- Public Health Ontario Blog Covid-19-vaccine-safety-surveillance / FR

Snapshot of AEFI for COVID-19 by Timiskaming Health Unit Area

An AEFI report refers to a report received by the PHU which pertains to one individual vaccine recipient who reported at least one adverse event after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Information on AEFI reports in the Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) and in Ontario were obtained from the Public Health Case and Contact Management Solution (CCM) and Public Health Ontario (PHO), respectively.

THU has 94 AEFI reports after 47,729 doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered, as of October 1, 2021. This corresponds to a rate of 0.2% or 1 AEFI report in every 508 vaccines administered. Most of these events were local reactions (Figure 1) and were fully self-resolving.

As of October 1, 2021, Ontario reported 12,859 AEFI reports after 21,273,477 doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered. This corresponds to a rate of 0.06% or 1 AEFI report in every 1,654 vaccines administered. As noted by Public Health Ontario, a higher overall **reporting rate** of AEFIs does not necessarily suggest a vaccine safety concern rather, it is an indicator of a robust passive vaccine safety surveillance system. Counts are subject to varying degrees of reporting bias. Underreporting may occur for mild or common reportable events, as well as stimulated (elevated) reporting, which can occur in response to factors such as media coverage and increased public awareness. Reporting rates should not be interpreted as incidence rates.[1]

For all COVID-19 vaccine products combined, the most to least commonly reported adverse events are depicted below as of October 1, 2021 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Most frequently reported adverse events for all COVID-19 Vaccines: Timiskaming, December 13, 2020 to October 1, 2021.

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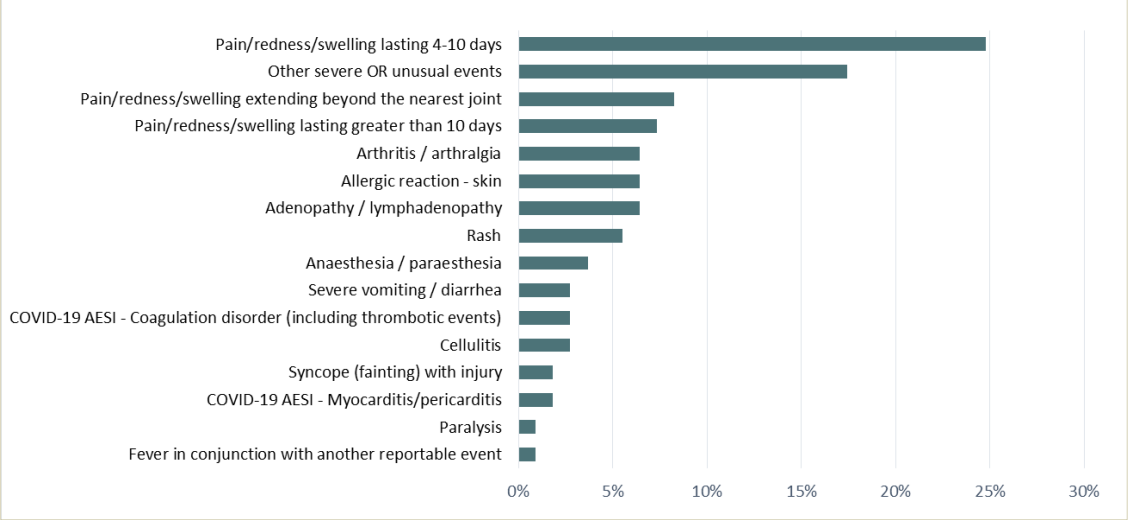
AESI, Adverse events of special interest



Note: An AEFI report may contain multiple adverse events. Thus the sum of all adverse event-specific counts may not equal to the total number of AEFI reports.
Data Source: CCM

A weekly report that tracks AEFIs for COVID-19 reported in Ontario is available here. This report provides distilled data on AEFIs by vaccine product/brand, severity of reports (i.e., serious and non-serious), and number of AEFI reports received by public health unit and region.[1]

[1] Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Weekly summary: adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) for COVID-19 in Ontario: December 13, 2020 to October 3, 2021. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2021. Accessed October 12, 2021 from https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/epi/covid-19-aefi-report.pdf?sc_lang=en