

COVID-19 Vaccine: Phase 2B and 2C

Key Messages:

- COVID-19 has affected every Albertan. Vaccines are safe, effective and save lives.
- As Alberta's vaccine supply is steadily increasing, we are preparing to immunize more Albertans who may be at risk from severe outcomes from COVID-19.
- In Phase 2B and 2C, Alberta continues to take a phased approach to protect those at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19, and those who interact with them, like health care workers and support staff.
- We expect to begin Phase 2B and 2C in April. Exact timing will depend on vaccine supply and will be announced closer to the start of each phase.
- The arrival of the vaccine does not mean the pandemic is over. For now, we all must continue to follow public health guidelines, including physical distancing, practicing good hand hygiene, masking when in public, and staying home when sick.

Phase 2B

- We are immunizing Albertans with underlying conditions as they are most at risk of severe outcomes.
 - A list of the associated underlying health conditions eligible under Phase 2B is available at [Alberta.ca](https://www.alberta.ca).
- We are acting on the advice of medical professionals to protect those most at risk.
 - These conditions were chosen as they are the ones that were associated with a higher risk of death or hospitalization for those under the age of 64.
 - The conditions included in Phase 2B were recommended by the Alberta Advisory Committee on Immunization and affirmed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- In Phase 2B, eligible Albertans with at least one of the underlying health conditions age 16 and older will be able to get the vaccine.
 - The age range has been dropped from 18 to 16 years of age as the Pfizer vaccine is licensed to immunize persons 16 years of age or older.
 - For Albertans requesting immunization for those 16 and 17 years of age, when booking your appointment, please verify your child will be receiving Pfizer vaccine. This vaccine is available at Alberta Health Services and pharmacies.
 - Albertans who will be 16 years of age this year must wait until they have turned 16 before accessing the Pfizer vaccine. Likewise, Albertans must be 18 years of age to be immunized with the Moderna or AstraZeneca vaccine at this time.

- This approach reflects the importance of protecting those most at risk of severe outcomes.
- Alberta will operate on the honour system. A doctor's note or other proof of an underlying condition will not be required.
 - Similar approaches are being adopted in Ontario and other provinces.
- Albertans may want to consult their health care provider prior to booking their appointment if they need clarification on whether or not their condition is on the list, but this is not required.

Phase 2C

- We will offer the vaccine to groups who are at high risk of experiencing severe outcomes, and Albertans who regularly come into contact with them.
- Phase 2C will offer the vaccine to:
 - Residents and staff linked to eligible congregate living settings: correctional facilities, homeless shelters, meatpacking plants, group homes including disability, mental health and other types of licensed supportive living.
 - Health-care workers providing direct and acute patient care who have a high potential for spread to high-risk individuals.
 - Caregivers of Albertans who are most at risk of severe outcomes.
- Workers eligible in this phase will need to provide personal identification that contains a birth date and proof of employment or professional registration (i.e., employee ID card, letter of employment or placement) when booking or attending their appointments with Alberta Health Services or at community pharmacies.

Residents and staff of congregate living sites (licensed/non-licensed)

- We are expanding the approach for shelters, correctional facilities and remand centers to include front line police, transport and court sheriffs who interact with residents at these facilities.
 - This is consistent with offering vaccine to staff in correctional facilities and shelters.
 - Front line policing staff regularly deal with individuals experiencing homelessness, and in transport of inmates who are an eligible population in this phase.
- We are also offering the vaccine to employees of meat packing plants as part of immunizing those in congregate settings.
 - There have been several large outbreaks in this sector and this will help protect these workers.

Health Care Workers

- We are offering the vaccine to health care workers caring for clinically vulnerable patients, as well as health care workers and office staff who deliver face-to-face care for patients, or have frequent contact with Albertans who are high-risk or are COVID positive.
- This includes physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists and all other health care professionals and their office or support staff.
 - For AHS, Covenant, Alberta Precision Labs and DynaLife, this will include anyone working in patient care facilities or providing services directly to clients in the community.
- First Nations healthcare workers on reserves and students undertaking their placement practicums in clinical areas are also eligible.

- This will ensure protection of the entire health system workforce given the critical services health care professionals deliver.

Caregivers

- We are offering the vaccine to all designated family support people of those individuals in long term care, designated supportive living and licensed supportive living facilities and up to two caregivers for children who have an eligible chronic condition.
- Health officials will work with licensed supportive living facilities, pharmacists, and primary care clinicians to notify and confirm eligibility of people in this group.

COVID-19 Vaccine: Phase 2B

Albertans age 16 or older with underlying health conditions eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Who can receive the vaccine under Phase 2B of Alberta's vaccine distribution plan?

Anyone with at least one of the following underlying conditions can receive the vaccine during this phase. The criteria below is recommended by the Alberta Advisory Committee on Immunization and affirmed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

A doctor's note or other proof of a condition is not required to receive the vaccine. Albertans may want to consult their health care provider prior to booking their appointment if they need clarification on whether or not their condition is on the list, but this is not required.

Condition	Description
Asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen	Individuals with congenital or acquired asplenia and functional hyposplenism
Cancer: People with a new diagnosis of or treatment for cancer in the last year	All forms of cancer are included, except non-invasive skin cancer.
Chronic heart disease and vascular disease	Chronic heart disease and vascular disease such as congenital heart disease, heart or kidney complications from high blood pressure, chronic heart failure, rheumatic heart disease, cardiomyopathy, heart valve disorders, ischaemic heart disease, atrial fibrillation, peripheral vascular disease or a history of arterial and venous thromboembolism, cerebrovascular diseases including stroke, TIAs, and aortic aneurysm. High blood pressure alone is not included.
Chronic kidney disease (CKD)	Individuals with moderate, severe or end stage CKD: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Moderate CKD: stage 3, estimated glomerular filtration rate eGFR= 30-59 mL/minSevere CKD: stage 4, eGFR= 15-29 mL/minEnd stage CKD: stage 5, eGFR <15 mL/min
Chronic liver disease	Individuals with chronic liver disease including cirrhosis, chronic hepatitis, alpha-1-Antitrypsin deficiency, hemochromatosis, primary sclerosing cholangitis, Budd-Chiari syndrome, and Wilson's disease, and any other liver disease of similar severity.
Chronic neurological disease	Individuals with chronic neurological disease including epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, dementia, cerebral palsy, stroke, transient ischaemic attack (TIA), multiple sclerosis, conditions in which respiratory function may be compromised such as motor neuron disease, muscular dystrophy, mitochondrial myopathy, hereditary and degenerative disease of the nervous system such as Huntington's disease, and any other neurological disease with similar severity.
Chronic respiratory disease	Individuals with chronic respiratory disease. Examples include COPD, pulmonary hypertension, bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis, interstitial lung disorder, pulmonary fibrosis, pneumoconiosis, bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), and severe asthma, with severity defined as someone who has had an asthma-related emergency department visit or hospital admission in the past year.
Diabetes mellitus	Diabetes that requires insulin or other anti-diabetic medication.

Immunosuppression	<p>Individuals experiencing immunosuppression due to disease or treatment, including patients undergoing chemotherapy leading to immunosuppression, patients undergoing radiotherapy, HIV infection at all stages, multiple myeloma or genetic disorders affecting the immune system (e.g. complement deficiency, severe combined immunodeficiency, homozygous sickle cell disease, thalassemia major).</p> <p>Individuals who are receiving immunosuppressive or immunomodulating biological therapy including, but not limited to, anti-TNF drugs, alemtuzumab, ofatumumab, rituximab, patients receiving protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors, and individuals treated with steroid sparing agents such as cyclophosphamide and mycophenolate mofetil.</p> <p>Individuals treated with, or with a condition that will likely need to be treated with, systemic steroids for more than two weeks at a dose equivalent to prednisolone at 20mg or more per day for adults.</p> <p>Anyone who may require long-term immunosuppressive treatments such as individuals with systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, and psoriasis.</p>
Pregnancy	Individuals who are currently pregnant
Severe mental illness or substance use disorder	Individuals with a hospital admission in the last year where schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, affective disorders, non-organic or organic psychosis, substance use disorders or any other mental illness is the most responsible disease for the admission.
Severe obesity	Individuals with a Body Mass Index (BMI) ≥ 40 kg/m ²
Severe or profound learning disabilities or severe developmental delay including Down syndrome	<p>Individuals with severe or profound learning disabilities or severe developmental delay.</p> <p>Examples include chromosomal abnormalities including Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, Rett syndrome, severe or profound intellectual disability. ADHD is not an eligible condition.</p>
Solid organ, bone marrow or stem cell transplant recipients	Individuals who have received these transplants, regardless of the date that the procedure occurred.

Book your appointment

COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and save lives. The vaccine helps prevent you from getting infected and protects you from getting severely sick if you do get it.

Bookings are not currently open for Phase 2B. We will let you know as soon as you can book an appointment.