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Alberta

COVID-19 Immunization Policy

Effective February 2021
Revised September 2022

Superseded

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For further information for health professionals on the use of this policy contact:

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Health and Wellness Promotion Branch

Public Health and Compliance Division

Alberta Health

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Introduction

The Alberta COVID-19 Immunization Policy (ACIP) sets out the requirements for the delivery of the COVID-19 Immunization Program.

Alberta's COVID-19 Immunization Program supports the Canadian COVID-19 Immunization Program goals to:

- Enable as many Canadians as possible to be immunized as quickly as possible against COVID-19, while ensuring that high risk populations be prioritized;
- Minimize serious illness and overall deaths while preserving health system capacity; and
- Reduce transmission to protect high-risk population.

The COVID-19 Immunization Program objectives are to:

- Provide a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine for all Albertans for whom the vaccine is licensed and recommended;
- Allocate, distribute and administer COVID-19 vaccine as efficiently, equitably and effectively as possible;
- Collaborate with stakeholders and build vaccine confidence; and,
- Monitor the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines.

Requirements for participation in the COVID-19 Immunization Program

Health practitioners must be compliant with the Immunization Regulation, Alberta Health immunization policies and the following requirements:

- Immunization Regulation
  - All immunization events must be reported electronically to the Provincial Immunization Repository (Imm/ARI).
  - Follow the strict storage and handling requirements for the vaccines.
  - Report adverse reactions following immunizations as they become aware.
- Vaccine inventory must be reconciled in the Alberta Vaccine Inventory System (AVI) **every Monday**.
- Follow the product monographs for information that includes:
  - Storage and Handling;
  - Vaccine preparation; and
  - Timeframe for use once thawed, reconstituted and/or vial punctured.
- Must have protocols in place for the management of anaphylaxis.
- Provide each client with complete informed consent (includes an overview of the vaccine, a discussion on the risks/benefits, side effects and verifying immunization history to determine if the client has received COVID-19 vaccine).
- Offer the client an immunization record.
- Include information to each client on participation in CANVAS active surveillance process for adverse events following immunization.
- Alberta Health Services (AHS) will coordinate outreach immunization services.
  - As coordinated by AHS, community pharmacies can assist in offering outreach immunization services in seniors' congregate care facilities (e.g., long-term care, designated supportive living, supportive living).
- COVID-19 vaccine must not be transferred between pharmacies or physician medical clinics unless directed by Alberta Health.
  - Transferring vaccine increases risks of cold chain excursions.
  - Vaccine inventory cannot be tracked when transfers occur without Alberta Health's assistance.

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Client eligibility

Albertans 6 months of age and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. Non-Alberta residents who live, work, go to school or travel in the province are also eligible to receive vaccine. Individuals without an active Alberta Health Care number must book an appointment with AHS by calling Health Link at 8-1-1.

Primary series

Two-dose primary series

Albertans 6 months of age and older are eligible for two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine as part of their primary series.

Three-dose primary series

Albertans 6 months of age and older with certain immunocompromising conditions are eligible for three doses of the COVID-19 vaccine as part of their primary series.

Booster doses

First booster dose

Albertans 5 years of age and older are eligible for a first booster dose 5 months after their primary series.

Subsequent booster doses

Albertans 18 years of age and older, are eligible for a subsequent booster dose 5 months after their last dose.

For specific eligibility criteria, see the Alberta Health COVID-19 vaccine and the Alberta Immunization Policy webpages.

Reporting immunizations to Imm/ARI

As of January 1, 2021, the Immunization Regulation requires that health practitioners electronically submit a report respecting immunizations to Imm/ARI within 7 days in accordance with the Immunization Data Submission and Response Guidelines.

For COVID-19 vaccine, immunization events should be reported as soon as possible and must be reported within 7 days.

Required reporting can be accomplished through immunization web services, Immunization Direct Submission Mechanism (IDSM) or Alberta Blue Cross (ABC) claims.

- Alberta Health is working with vendors to integrate immunizing partners' point of care systems to Imm/ARI.
- Providers can register to access the IDSM by following these instructions.

  For pharmacists: COVID-19 immunizations are batched into Imm/ARI through the ABC claims data that pharmacists submit. IDSM is for privately funded vaccine only.

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REASON CODES

Listed in order of priority

Reason code	Descriptor	Pin (Pharmacy use)
03	Health Care Workers not including LTC/DSL	10000003 (Pfizer/BioNTech) 20000003 (Moderna) 21800003 (Moderna bivalent) 11700003 (Pfizer bivalent)
44	LTC/DSL Staff	10000044 (Pfizer/BioNTech) 20000044 (Moderna) 21800044 (Moderna bivalent) 11700044 (Pfizer bivalent)
22	LTC/DSL Resident	10000022 (Pfizer/BioNTech) 20000022 (Moderna) 21800022 (Moderna bivalent) 11700022 (Pfizer bivalent)
70	Other congregate care living settings (e.g. senior lodges, corrections, group homes)	10000070 (Pfizer/BioNTech) 20000070 (Moderna) 21800070 (Moderna bivalent) 11700070 (Pfizer bivalent)
02	Advanced age (65+)	10000002 (Pfizer/BioNTech) 20000002 (Moderna) 21800002 (Moderna bivalent) 20003002 (Moderna booster half dose 50 mcg) 11700002 (Pfizer bivalent)
66	Other Risk (Individuals 12 years to 64 years of age with underlying health conditions, see appendix for details)	10000066 (Pfizer/BioNTech) 20000066 (Moderna) 21800066 (Moderna bivalent) only 18+ 20003066 (Moderna booster half dose 50 mcg) 11700066 (Pfizer bivalent)
72	12 years to 64 years of age	10000072 (Pfizer/BioNTech) 20000072 (Moderna) 21800072 (Moderna bivalent) only 18+ 20003072 (Moderna booster half dose 50 mcg) 11700072 (Pfizer bivalent)
73	COVID-19 in-school immunization program	N/A
74	COVID-19 additional dose for travel	10000074 (Pfizer/BioNTech) 20000074 (Moderna)
75	5 years to 11 years of age	11000075 (Pediatric Pfizer/BioNTech) 21000075 (Moderna 50mcg dose for 6 years to 11 years of age)
76	6 months to 4 years of age	N/A
98	Research (AH approved)	10000098 (Pfizer/BioNTech) 20000098 (Moderna)

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Reporting Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFIs)

Health practitioners shall ensure that adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) are reported to AHS within 3 days of becoming aware.

Passive Surveillance

Passive AEFI surveillance systems rely on the client voluntarily reporting an AEFI for further investigation and reporting.

- As part of informed consent, clients are provided information on expected reactions following immunization and are encouraged to call Health Link or their health practitioner if there are events outside the expected reactions.
- As per the Immunization Regulation these events are to be reported to the AHS Provincial AEFI team, which determines if the events meet the reporting criteria for submitting the AEFI to Alberta Health.

Active Surveillance

Active AEFI surveillance involves proactively collecting data from clients who have received the vaccine through phone calls or surveys. The CANVAS – COVID Study is optional, and usually takes less than one minute to complete online. The initiative includes three email surveys sent to clients; one 8 days after dose 1, the second 8 days after dose 2, and the third six months later.

Enrollment should occur at the time of immunization and clients should be provided with the attached QR code from the printable poster which can be scanned, or by providing the link: https://canvas-covid.ca/.

COVID Vaccine QR Handout_18DEC2020

The Active Surveillance and Reporting of Adverse Events following COVID-19 Immunization policy includes case definitions and reporting requirements for COVID-19 vaccine, the process for 'active and passive surveillance' of AEFIs following COVID-19 vaccine, and the list and description of adverse events of special interest to be monitored following COVID-19 immunization. The COVID-19 policy is a supplement to the current Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) Policy.

See Alberta Health Services information on how to report an adverse event following immunization.

Vaccine storage and handling

The requirements for the storage, handling and transportation of all COVID-19 vaccines are outlined in the:

- Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling for COVID-19 Vaccine
- Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine
- Product monographs (see Vaccine preparation section below for specific product links)

Temperature Excursions

- Health practitioners must report temperature excursions to the vaccine manufacturer within 24 hours.
  - The Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling for COVID-19 Vaccine includes manufacturer contact information (including after hours).
- Any vaccine that is determined not viable must be discarded according to the health practitioners' standard of practice and must be entered into AVI as wasted using the correct reason.

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Alberta Vaccine Inventory (AVI) management system

The AVI Management System is the administrative system that supports the vaccine inventory management within the Alberta Immunization Program and is integral to the management of the COVID-19 Immunization Program. It is a secure online information system used by Alberta for the ordering, receiving and reconciliation of vaccines in the province.

All immunizing partners must receive the COVID-19 vaccine they have been shipped in AVI and are required to reconcile inventory using AVI **every Monday** by 9 pm.

All vaccine delivery sites must have at least one provider (up to 2) who will be responsible for AVI. Access and training will be provided by Alberta Health.

Wastage mitigation strategies

It is imperative that every effort is made to reduce COVID-19 vaccine wastage.

- Follow the storage and handling requirements to minimize vaccine wastage due to improper transportation, storage or handling.
- When possible, group individuals to be immunized on the same day. However, some wastage will be inevitable to ensure that no immunization opportunity is missed.

Vaccine preparation

Each COVID-19 vaccine has unique preparation requirements that health practitioners must be aware of.

Pfizer (Comirnaty)

- COVID-19 vaccine (mRNA) – Pfizer-BioNTech – Ultra frozen Vaccine (Comirnaty) 12 years of age and older
- COVID-19 vaccine (mRNA) – Pfizer-BioNTech – Ultra frozen Vaccine (Comirnaty) 5 years to 11 years of age
- Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Adult and Pediatric Comparison Table
- Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (Product Monograph) (includes pediatric formulation)
- The S.T.E.P.S. to Pfizer-Biotech COVID-19 vaccination
- Information about Low Dead-Volume Syringes and/or needles for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine
- Pfizer- BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Canadian Health Care Professionals

Moderna (SpikeVax)

- COVID-19 Vaccine (mRNA) – Moderna (SpikeVax) frozen vaccine
- COVID-19 Vaccine (mRNA) – Moderna (SpikeVax) frozen vaccine for Children 6 years to 11 years of age
- COVID-19 Vaccine (mRNA) – Moderna (SpikeVax) frozen vaccine for Children 6 Months to 5 Years
- COVID-19 Vaccine (mRNA) – Moderna (SpikeVax) frozen vaccine Bivalent (Original and Omicron BA.1)
- Moderna COVID-19 vaccine (Product Monograph) (includes pediatric formulations)
- SpikeVax Dosing & Administration and Storage & Handling

Novavax (Nuvaxovid)

- COVID-19 Vaccine-Novavax
- Novavax – COVID-19 Vaccine (Product Monograph)

Janssen

- COVID-19 Vaccine-Janssen
- Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine (Product Monograph)

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