

Key Messages, Questions & Answers – Phase 2 B.C.’s Immunization Plan

Over 80+ seniors/65+ Indigenous vaccine bookings through Health Authorities

Key Messaging on Phase 2 of B.C.’s Immunization Plan

- B.C.’s strategy is based on scientific evidence and expert advice, and guidelines from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization. It was developed by B.C.’s Immunization Committee and public health leadership committee led by B.C.’s Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry.
- The immunization plan depends on consistent delivery of Health Canada-approved vaccine supply by the federal government. Over the coming months, vaccination timelines for different groups may change based on how much vaccine is available.
- The immunization plan considers people’s different needs and different ways of accessing information and will ensure nobody eligible to receive the vaccine is left behind.
- We appreciate people’s patience as we now shift into Phase 2 of our immunization plan, which includes immunizing seniors 80 years and older and Indigenous peoples 65 years and older, along with healthcare workers who have not yet been vaccinated, and people living in settings that make them vulnerable to outbreaks.
- With so many seniors in need of vaccine, we are staggering our approach:
 - We’re going to be reaching out directly to some of the people we have contact information for – seniors and high-risk people residing in independent living and senior’s supportive housing (including staff), and home care support clients and staff – to help us move as quickly as possible.
 - Other seniors will need to call to book appointments, with older British Columbians becoming eligible first to allow us to continue to prioritize the people in our communities who are the most at risk.
- In some smaller, remote and Indigenous communities, appointment and vaccination schedule may differ slightly from provincial schedule.
- We understand that many are eager to register to receive their vaccinations and learn more about the process, and family and friends of seniors are eager to assist however they can.

- Within Phase 2, different groups will be eligible to receive the vaccine at different times, with the oldest British Columbians becoming eligible first. This will allow us to continue to prioritize the people in our communities who are the most at risk.
- As we have said from the start of this plan, everyone living in B.C. who is eligible to receive the vaccine will be able to get it and nobody will miss their opportunity to be immunized.
- By the end of September, it is expected that most people in B.C. will have the opportunity to get the vaccine if they want it.
- Once you are eligible to receive a vaccine you are always eligible, you will not miss your chance to be vaccinated.
- You can learn more about when different groups will be eligible to get the vaccine on the BC Government website here: gov.bc.ca/covidvaccine.
- Information for Seniors 80+ and Indigenous Peoples 65+ is available here: gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst

For calls that are asking for more information about Phase 2 of B.C.'s Immunization Plan:

- Today, March 1, health authorities will start contacting people living and working in independent living centres and senior's supportive housing, as well as long-term home support clients and staff to book appointments.
- *People in this group do not need to call anyone, they will be contacted.*
- Other seniors will be able to call in in the weeks ahead. The exact date someone can call to book an appointment depends on how old they are.
- On March 1, 2021, first dose immunizations begin for those living and working in independent living centres and senior's supportive housing, as well as long-term home support clients and staff. Health authorities will directly contact those in this priority group to book appointments – there is no need to call.
- Beginning March 8, 2021, seniors aged 80+ and Indigenous peoples aged 65+ who are not living in independent living or senior's supportive housing can make one call to book their appointment through their local health authority call centre according to a staggered schedule to avoid long waits and system overload. There is no need to register before booking. Immunization clinic locations will be confirmed at time of booking, with vaccinations starting as early as March 15.
- The call-in schedule to book appointments will be staggered to avoid long waits and system capacity.

- **March 8:** Seniors born in or before 1931 (90 years+)/Indigenous peoples born in or before 1956 (65 years+) may call to book their vaccine appointment,
- **March 15:** Seniors born in or before 1936 (85 years+) may call to book their vaccine appointment, and
- **March 22:** Seniors born in or before 1941 (80 years+) may call to book their vaccine appointment.

For Callers that are looking to contact their Health Authority, or for more information about Phase 2 of B.C.'s Immunization Plan:

1. I don't know what Health Authority I am in?

- To locate what Health Authority you are in, please go here:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities>
- From here, you are able to search what Health Authority you are located in based on your community.

2. I can't get through to my Health Authority call centre?

- Health Authority call centres will be accepting bookings from people in eligible age categories during specific weeks starting March 8 and onwards.
- We know some people will experience long hold times and challenges in getting through to a call centre representative. We're working to provide capacity, but due to the size of the vaccination effort, some hold times will be inevitable. As such, we appreciate everyone's patience as we all work together to book the next eligible groups for their vaccination.
- The schedule can be found on our website at gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst
- We are urging those who are not yet eligible to book the vaccine to avoid calling the call centres in order to ensure there's capacity.
- Unless you are in the listed age group or are an advocate or family member acting for someone in the age group, please do not phone the call centre.
- If you call before you're eligible to do so, it will just prevent someone who is eligible from getting through to the call centre.
- Anyone who is looking for information on when they are eligible can visit our website at gov.bc.ca/covidvaccine

3. Can I go anywhere to book my appointment online?

- At this time, Fraser Health will have this option, opening on March 8.
- If you live in the Fraser Health Authority, you have the option to book online here:

[Fraserhealth.ca/vaccine](https://fraserhealth.ca/vaccine)

- To locate what Health Authority you are in, please go here:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities>

4. Should I be calling Service BC to book?

- Booking for eligible age cohorts is being conducted by regional Health Authorities only and begins on March 8.

5. I am a senior born in 1941 or earlier, or I am Indigenous and born in 1956 or earlier. When can I call to book my first dose?

- Vaccine call centres for seniors open March 8, 2021. You can book a vaccine appointment for yourself or your spouse.
- You can also have a family member or friend call for you. It's easy and safe to book over the phone.
- When you call is based on your age.
 - If you are born in 1931 or earlier (and are 90+) or Indigenous and born in 1956 or earlier (and are 65+), please call the week of March 8.
 - If you are born in 1936 or earlier (and are 85+), please call the week of March 15.
 - If you are born in 1941 or earlier (and are 90+), please call the week of March 22.

6. What telephone number can people call to make their vaccination appointment, or make an appointment on behalf of a loved one?

- Health Authority call centre numbers are listed below:
 - Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA): 1-877-587-5767
 - Fraser Health Authority (FHA): 1-855-755-2455
 - Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA): 1-833-348-4787

- Interior Health Authority (IHA): 1-877-740-7747
- Northern Health Authority (NHA): 1-844-255-7555

7. Where can I find more information online from my Health Authority?

- Health Authority webpages are listed below:
 - **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA):**
<http://www.vch.ca/>
 - **Fraser Health Authority (FHA):**
Fraserhealth.ca/vaccine
 - **Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA):**
islandhealth.ca/covid19vaccine
 - **Interior Health Authority (IHA):**
www.interiorhealth.ca
 - **Northern Health Authority (NHA):**
www.northernhealth.ca

8. What personal information will people be asked for to make an appointment?

- When you call your health authority, you'll be asked for:
 - First and last name
 - Date of birth
 - Postal code
 - Personal Health Number (found on the back of your B.C. driver's licence, BC Services Card or CareCard)
- While your Personal Health Number is not required, having this ready while you are on the phone will save you booking time.
- You will also be asked for your contact information. This could be an email address you or your family checks regularly or a phone number that can receive text messages.
- We will never ask you for your SIN, driver's licence number or banking and credit card details.
- Information for Seniors 80+ and Indigenous Peoples 65+ is available here:
gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst

9. What does a typical phone call look like with my Health Authority? What are the steps?

- Confirm you are in the age group eligible for booking
- You will be asked for your:
 - Legal Name
 - Date of Birth
 - Postal code
 - PHN (if you have one)
 - Phone (of person or family/support member)
 - Email (of person or family/support member)
- You will be given a list of clinics to choose from close to home and together you will choose the timeslot that works for you.
- The call centre agent will confirm your appointment time and location and you will receive a confirmation by text or email if you've provided that contact information.
- Please note to expect that you might wait on hold for some time.

10. I am calling for myself – what do I need to know?

- Here's what happens when you call:
 - The phone agent verifies your age and asks for your personal information.
 - You work with the phone agent to select an appointment time slot at a clinic close to home.
 - The phone agent confirms your appointment time and clinic location.
 - If you've provided contact information, you get a confirmation message sent by email or text.

11. I am calling for someone else – what do I need to know?

- Here's what happens when you call on behalf of someone:
 - The phone agent verifies who you are calling for and asks you to provide their age and personal information
 - You work with the phone agent to select an appointment time slot at a clinic close to the home of the person you're calling for
 - The phone agent confirms the appointment time and clinic location
 - If you've provided contact information, you get a confirmation message sent by email or text

- Advocates, community supports, and community organizations can also book an appointment on behalf of a senior.

12. What do I need to bring to my vaccine appointment?

- Get ready for your appointment:
 - Wear a short-sleeved shirt and a mask
 - Arrive a few minutes before your scheduled appointment time
 - You can bring one person with you for support.
- All clinics are wheelchair accessible. You will be provided a mask if you need one.
- Please bring photo identification that shows date of birth and personal health care number (e.g. driver's licence, BC services card, BC care card)

13. How long does an appointment last? How much time will the whole process take?

- Your appointment will likely take fifteen minutes once inside the clinic to go through check-in and vaccine an additional fifteen minutes mandatory post vaccine observation.

14. Will I get an appointment schedules on the day of calling – or will these be booked based on a call back approach?

- In every Health Authority, your vaccine appointment will be booked at the time of your phone call.
- Follow-up confirmation will be provided by text or email for those who provide that contact information.

15. Are supports available for someone who does not have access to transportation to and from an immunization appointment, or are not mobile enough to go to a clinic?

- If you, or someone you are booking for does not have access to transportation to the appointment, please mention this at the timing of booking and you will be called back by the home immunization team.

16. What information will Indigenous peoples have to provide to demonstrate their eligibility?

- We are working closely with our partners in Indigenous communities, including the First Nations Health Authority and Métis Nation BC to develop our immunization plan.
- We know how important it is that Indigenous identity is respected, in every step of this process.
- If someone self identifies as Indigenous, additional proof of identity will not be required.

17. If someone does not have BC identification, like a Service BC card or Driver's Licence, how do they book an appointment?

- BC identification is not required; the following methods of identification can be used:
 - Photo identification, such as driver's licence, government services card, previous provincial care card.

18. How will you stop queue-jumping if someone shows up at one of these centres and wants to get vaccinated but is under the age of 80?

- Eligibility checks will take place at all vaccine centres in British Columbia and people will need to show identification to receive their immunization.
- Only people who are eligible will get their vaccine dose. You will be turned away from the clinic if your age group is not yet eligible.
- Public health has procedures in place to prevent queue jumping.
- Anyone who has a Personal Health Number will also have to provide it when they sign up to be immunized, and this will help us verify their age.
- We are all in this together, and we expect everyone to respect their communities and one another by waiting their turn to be immunized.

19. How will mobile teams help people in rural areas, and people who are housebound, be immunized?

- Using mobile clinics, we reached every long-term care and assisted living home and many rural and remote Indigenous communities in the province.
- Mobile clinics will now be used to immunize independent and supporting-living residents and staff, and people living and working in long-term home care.

- Mobile clinics meet people where they are, with health care providers bringing vaccine to people's homes, or communities, so that they do not have to travel in order to be vaccinated.

20. Can people bring someone along with them to their immunization appointment?

- Yes, expectation is they bring one person who can accompany them through the process, as support.

21. Is every immunization clinic wheelchair accessible?

- Yes, all immunization centres are chosen to be accessible.
- More information on what to expect for Seniors 80+ and Indigenous Peoples 65+ is available here: gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst

22. How do I know whether I am in an independent living facility where vaccine will come to me, or whether I need to call and book?

- Health authorities will be working to reach out quickly as they can to people in independent living, long-term home care clients and others.
- If you haven't heard from the health authority by the time it's your turn to call and book an appointment, you won't be turned away.
- Starting by reaching out directly to people living in independent living facilities and long-term home care first will just allow us to move quickly and get everyone immunized faster.
- No one will miss out on getting immunized. Once your age group is eligible to call and book an appointment, you can call anytime.

23. Who is eligible to be immunized in Phase 2?

- Indigenous peoples born in or before 1956 (65 years and older).
- Seniors born in or before 1941 (80 years and older).
- Seniors and high-risk population residing in independent living and supportive housing (including staff).
- Long-term home support clients and staff.

24. You said people will need to provide their Personal Health number in order to be immunized. What about people who don't have this, like people who are new to B.C., temporary foreign workers, or other vulnerable groups?

- If someone does not have a Personal Health Number but is living in B.C., they can still call and make an appointment to be immunized.
- Public health has procedures in place for booking appointments for people who are living in B.C. who do not have a Personal Health Number.

25. Once a senior has received two doses, is it safe for them to gather socially with people outside their household? Can I go visit my mom/dad/aunt/etc once they have been immunized?

- The restrictions that remain in place will be in place for people who have been immunized, and people who have not. There will not be different rules for different groups.
- Even though we now have access to vaccines, the pandemic is not over yet.
- We are also still learning about whether or not someone who has been immunized can still transmit the virus to others.
- Right now, it is important that everyone continues to protect each other by following public health orders, even if they have been vaccinated.

26. Why are Indigenous peoples 65 and over able to be immunized starting at a younger age than other seniors?

- B.C.'s plan is focused on protecting those most vulnerable to severe illness and death first.
- We know that Indigenous peoples in general are at much greater risk of severe COVID-19 disease including death, and remoteness or geographical isolation further increases their vulnerability and the impact that COVID-19 can have.
- We know many people in B.C. are eager for their turn to be immunized. While vaccine supply is limited, we will continue to immunize people who are the most vulnerable to getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19, including those who live in remote and rural Indigenous communities.

- We acknowledge the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples and recognize the need for prioritized access to the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure cultural continuity and to counter the impacts of longstanding racism and discrimination.

27. Which vaccines will be used in Phase 2? Will AstraZeneca be used?

- Phase 2 of B.C.'s Immunization Plan relies heavily on the Pfizer and Moderna Vaccines. These two vaccines will be at the centre of the strategy in Phase 2, because they are very effective for use in older people.
- The approval of the AstraZeneca vaccine by Health Canada is great news for British Columbians.
- We are looking forward to being able to administer this safe, approved vaccine – and we are going to integrate it into our phased approach as soon as we get a better idea of how many doses we are receiving and when.
- This will allow us to look at potentially vaccinating additional priority populations and front-line essential workers when we shift into Phase 3 of our plan in April and May.
- Even without the AstraZeneca vaccine – our allocated supply from Pfizer and Moderna will still allow us to immunize everyone eligible in B.C. by the end of September.

28. Why is this plan not prioritizing essential workers?

- The evidence tells us that the single greatest risk factor for severe illness and death from COVID-19 is age – regardless of what you do for a living.
- But this is our plan based on Pfizer and Moderna. With the approval of additional vaccines, we've always said that we would look at opportunities to include front-line essential workers or those working in specific industries later in Phase 3.
- The approval of AstraZeneca is good news for B.C., and we will be looking at the best ways to integrate it into our phased approach as soon as we get a better idea of how many doses we are receiving and when.
- Even without the AstraZeneca vaccine – our allocated supply from Pfizer and Moderna will still allow us to immunize everyone eligible in B.C. by the end of September.

29. Where is my local vaccine clinic/where are mass clinics located?

- Appointment locations for people in Phase 2 will be confirmed at the time they book their appointment.

- People will be able to choose an appointment location that works for them. This could be somewhere close to their home, or close to their place work.
- The full list of mass clinic locations for Phase 3 will be shared publicly at a later date.

30. How will seniors who don't speak English book appointments?

- This process will look different in every health authority.
- In Fraser Health, people can book an appointment in a number of languages.
- In the weeks ahead, people living in Vancouver Coastal Health will also be able to book appointments in other languages, like Mandarin, and Cantonese.
- We know we have more work to do make this process as accessible as possible.
- When Phase 3 of our immunization plan begins, our provincial contact centre (1-888) will be able to connect with people in a number of languages.