

Script for staff answering questions about COVID-19 vaccine

Updated: April 1, 2021

Please add the following to your outgoing voice messages:

- If you have general questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, please call 811 or 1-888-COVID19, or visit the Ministry of health Website, gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine
- If you have specific questions about cancer and COVID-19, please see go to our website at bccancer.bc.ca/covid19
- If you look at this information and still have questions, please leave a message saying you have looked the websites and what your question is.

What does “clinically extremely vulnerable” mean?

- Clinically extremely vulnerable, or CEV, are people who are at a higher risk of getting very sick if they got COVID-19. Some people with cancer are included in this group.
- People in the CEV group are now able receive their vaccine.
- **(if caller wants an explanation as to how the CEV population was determined)** The CEV group was decided based on scientific evidence from around the world and expert opinion here in B.C.

When will I get my vaccine invitation letter?

- If you are in the “clinically extremely vulnerable” group, you should get a letter in the mail by April 15.
- You can book your vaccine after you get your letter.

Can I book my vaccine before I get my letter?

- No, please wait for your letter to book your vaccine.

I am in the CEV group but I did not get my letter. What should I do?

- **(if this is before April 15):** You should get your letter by April 15th.
- **(if this is after April 15):** Go to gov.bc.ca/cevccovid to learn how to access the new online Get Vaccinated registration and booking tool or call centre. You will be asked to provide your Personal Health Number and the registration system or phone agent will confirm if you're eligible.

If the registration system doesn't confirm your eligibility and you believe you should be included on the clinically extremely vulnerable list, contact the care team who is currently managing your condition with you. They will help you.

Script for staff answering questions about COVID-19 vaccine

Updated: April 1, 2021

Can my caregiver get the vaccine?

- People who are Caregivers are not being offered the vaccine at this time unless they themselves meet the criteria for vaccination.
- Your caregiver may be eligible for the vaccine depending on their age or health condition.

Who is included in the cancer CEV group?

- You're having systemic therapy for cancer now or you have had it in the past 12 months. This includes chemotherapy, molecular therapy, immunotherapy, monoclonal antibodies, hormonal therapy for cancer
- You're having radiation therapy for cancer now or in the past 6 months
- You're having or had targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system such as CAR-T cell treatments in the past 6 months
- You have blood or bone marrow cancer (such as leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, myelodysplastic disorders)
- You have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the past 6 months, or are still taking immunosuppressant medicine related to your transplant

I just missed the cut off for the CEV group. Can I get the vaccine?

(For example, the caller may have had radiation therapy 6 months and 2 days ago. The cut off for the CEV group is radiation therapy in the past 6 months. There will be people who just miss this cut off and they may be upset).

- We understand you are anxious to get the vaccine. We know this is frustrating.
- The experts who defined the CEV group chose these guidelines to identify the people most at risk.
- If you do not meet the definition for the CEV group, you cannot get the vaccine right now. Please wait until your age group is offered the vaccine.

Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Yes. All of the COVID-19 vaccines available in Canada are safe, and cannot give you COVID-19.
- Doctors and researchers have looked at the evidence. They agree that unless you have a very serious allergy to any of the vaccine ingredients, you should strongly consider getting a COVID-19 vaccine. People with cancer have a higher chance of severe symptoms if they get COVID-19.
- While you are waiting for a vaccine, and after you get the vaccine, you should continue to follow all Public Health safety guidelines.

Script for staff answering questions about COVID-19 vaccine

Updated: April 1, 2021

Is the vaccine safe for people with cancer?

- All vaccines approved in Canada and available for use in B.C. have been deemed safe *for their recommended use*.
- While the COVID-19 vaccine is very safe, researchers do not know exactly how much protection it will give people with cancer compared to those who do not have cancer.
- However, the way vaccines work means that there is a strong chance that your immune system will learn to protect you, to some degree, from COVID-19.

Can I choose the vaccine brand I receive?

- All vaccines approved in Canada and available in B.C. are safe and effective *for their recommended use* and will help protect you against COVID-19. While there are many different brands of COVID-19 vaccines right now, just like other vaccines, you cannot choose the specific brand you get. If you choose to delay, there is no guarantee that you will get a specific brand of vaccine later.
- While there are many different brands of COVID-19 vaccines at this point, just like other vaccines, you cannot choose the specific brand you get.
- Like all other vaccines, the one offered to you is the best one based on a variety of factors, including what products are available; what product is approved for your age or health conditions; allergies to any of the vaccine ingredients; your location and whether the vaccine can be delivered there, and more.
- There is no single person or organization that decides what vaccine you will receive - it is based on a variety of factors.

When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- B.C.'s COVID-19 Immunization Plan has started and may look different depending on where you live.
- If you are currently receiving cancer treatment, you may be included as "Clinically Extremely Vulnerable" as outlined by the BC Provincial Government.

I'm having cancer treatment. Can I get the vaccine?

If you are on treatment or your treatment needs to start before you can get the vaccine, do not delay your cancer treatment. Book your vaccine as soon as you can.

Script for staff answering questions about COVID-19 vaccine

Updated: April 1, 2021

You may need to time your vaccine around your treatment or medication. What type of treatment are you having?

For patients who are having or have had radiation therapy:

Please go to our website bccancer.bc.ca/covid19. You will find all the information you need on that page.

(if the patient cannot access our website or they really want you to tell them, refer to points below. You may need to ask clarifying questions about where they are at in their treatment)

- If you are having radiation therapy right now, book your vaccine appointment as soon as you can.
- If you had radiation therapy more than 6 months ago, it is generally safe to have the vaccine.
- If you had radiation in the last 6 months, it is generally safe to get the vaccine as soon as possible. However, if you had large fields of radiation to your entire spine, whole abdomen, or whole body, you should check with your oncologist before getting the vaccine. You may need a blood test or you may need to wait before getting the vaccine. This type of radiation is rare.
- If you are going to start radiation therapy in the next 2-4 weeks, and you are currently eligible to get a vaccine (for example, your age group is eligible), try to get the vaccine as soon as possible (within a few weeks). When you have your cancer centre appointment, please let the staff know the date of your vaccine appointment.
- It is ok to get your vaccine on the same day as your radiation treatment.
- You are most protected from COVID-19 about 2 weeks after your vaccine. Your oncologist may want you to start your radiation about two weeks after your first vaccine.

For patients having systemic therapy (chemotherapy, hormone therapy, immunotherapy, others)

- If you are on cyclical therapy (for example, chemotherapy every 3-4 weeks), the best time to get your vaccine is in the week before your next treatment. You should not get the vaccine on the same day as your systemic therapy treatment.



Provincial Health Services Authority

Script for staff answering questions about COVID-19 vaccine

Updated: April 1, 2021

- If you are on continuous treatment (for example, oral medications or hormone therapy), you can get the vaccine any time.

For patients having stem cell, bone marrow transplant, or CAR-T cell therapy soon:

- If you are planned for a stem cell or bone marrow transplant or CAR-T cell therapy, try to book your vaccine at least 2 weeks before you start the chemotherapy that is given before the transplant or CAR-T cells.
- If you have already had a transplant, or you did not get one or both vaccine doses before your transplant, you are able to get a COVID-19 vaccine dose starting 3 months after your transplant.