

Date:	March 17, 2021
To:	Northern Health staff and medical staff
From:	Northern Health EOC
RE:	COVID-19 vaccine deferral lifted for recent lab-confirmed cases

In early February 2021, Northern Health implemented a [three-month deferral of COVID-19 vaccination](#) in individuals who have had a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection, in order to preserve limited vaccine supplies for individuals at high risk and with no immunity against COVID-19.

As of today, this deferral is being discontinued. **All individuals in eligible priority groups will now be offered COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of any recent history of COVID-19 infection, as long as any acute symptoms have resolved.**

This change is being made in the context of improved vaccine supply, and of having already offered vaccine to the highest-priority populations and settings, so the overall benefit of this vaccine-sparing measure is now lower than it was in February. In addition, this change will simplify logistics and enable us to more effectively scale up immunization service delivery to larger and larger segments of the population.

Individuals with recent COVID-19 infection remain at very low short-term risk of re-infection. However, COVID-19 immunization is expected to provide longer-lasting immunity than natural COVID-19 infection, so COVID-19 immunization remains recommended to all eligible groups, regardless of recent history of COVID-19 infection.

If you are a member of an eligible group under [BC's COVID-19 Immunization Plan](#) who was contacted by the Northern Health call centre after February 3 but asked to defer your immunization based on a positive test for COVID-19, you may now proceed with booking an appointment as long as you are no longer on isolation.