

Updates for residents and families in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities

Issue 18 – March 10, 2021

We continue in our commitment to keep you informed about the changing information about COVID-19 and other information by producing this update for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities twice per month.

COVID-19 vaccine second dose delayed to 16 weeks after first dose

The province is delaying the delivery of second dose to 16 weeks after first dose. As a result, Northern Health will be delaying all dose 2 immunizations and clinics as of March 1, 2021. The second dose will be provided 16 weeks following the first dose and clinics will be organized to accommodate this new time frame.

Is it safe for my second dose to be delayed?

Yes, Health Canada supports a longer delay between first and second doses. Many countries have delayed second doses and found that people still have a strong immune response against COVID-19.

Am I protected by one dose?

Studies around the world are showing that even one dose of COVID-19 vaccine provides very good protection against transmission of COVID-19 and serious illness.

This change will help ensure that the maximum number of British Columbians are able to receive their first dose of immunization.

For more information, see: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID-19_vaccine/Public_health_statement_deferred_second_dose.pdf

Protecting our seniors and Elders: Phase 2 COVID-19 immunization plan update

The Province of BC has released more information about Phase 2 of the COVID-19 immunization plan, which focuses on protecting our seniors and Elders.

Those in Phase 2 receiving their first vaccine dose in March and early April include:

- Seniors aged 80+ (born in or before 1941) who are not yet immunized
- Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) aged 65+, Elders (born in or before 1956), and additional communities not yet immunized
- All remaining health care workers providing direct care across health care settings, family doctors, and medical specialists not yet immunized
- Vulnerable populations in select congregated settings (e.g., shelters, group homes)
- People receiving long-term home support

Phase 2 vaccine appointments for seniors and Elders

Beginning March 8, 2021, seniors aged 80 and older, and Indigenous peoples aged 65 and older, who are not living in independent or seniors' supportive housing can call to book their appointment through the Northern Health call centre. Some communities may have different directions and

eligibility may vary. Please find your community on the Northern Health website for specific details of COVID-19 immunization clinics, appointments, and eligibility.

Immunization clinic locations will be confirmed at the time of booking, with vaccinations starting as early as March 15, 2021.

Seniors in independent living or supportive housing, people in home-care support

You do not need to call to book a vaccine appointment if you're:

- A senior or high-risk person living in independent living or senior's supportive housing
- Staff in independent living or senior's supportive housing
- Home-care support clients and staff

Your health authority will reach out to you or your housing operator to book your appointment for you.

How to book your vaccine appointment:

Following the schedules on the Northern Health website, seniors and Elders can call the Northern Health call centre to book their vaccine appointment.

- Call centre: 1-844-255-7555
- Hours: 7am to 7pm, seven days a week.

For community-specific information, and step-by-step instructions on how to call to book an appointment for yourself, for a family member, for a friend or neighbour, visit:

<https://www.northernhealth.ca/health-topics/covid-19-vaccine-plan#nh-resources>

For reliable information about COVID-19, we recommend:

- World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- The Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus.html>
- The BC Centre for Disease Control: <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Coronavirus-FAQ-English.pdf>

By working together, we can protect your own health, the health of your loved ones, and the health of Northern Health staff members.

- Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: **1-844-645-7811**
- BC Govt. COVID-19 Helpline: **1-888-COVID19** or **1-888-268-4319**

Previous updates for residents and families in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities:

- January 11, 2021: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-14.pdf
- January 27, 2021: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-15.pdf
- February 11, 2021: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-16.pdf
- February 23, 2021: https://www.northernhealth.ca/sites/northern_health/files/services/home-community-care/documents/long-term-care-assisted-living-digest-17.pdf