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News

# Ontario Expands Eligibility For Third Dose Of COVID-19 Vaccine



By **Pamela Vanmeer** November 3, 2021



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KAWARTHA LAKES-The Ontario government is expanding eligibility for booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to additional groups of high-risk individuals starting November 6, 2021. Over the coming months, Ontario is also prepared to gradually roll out booster doses to all Ontarians aged 12 and over.

While the province continues to report one of the lowest rates of

active cases in the country and continues to make steady progress in vaccinating more individuals, offering a booster dose will contribute to the fight against COVID-19 according to Ontario government.

“Keeping a low rate of infection in our communities and protecting our most vulnerable is how we can keep our schools, businesses and social settings as safe as possible while avoiding further lockdowns,” said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health. “To provide every individual the best protection while learning to live with the virus for the long-term, we are prepared to expand booster eligibility to all Ontarians pending clinical recommendations, with eligibility expanding this week to individuals who face a higher risk of contracting COVID-19.”

Based on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and in alignment with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization’s (NACI) recent recommendation, the province will begin offering booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to the following vulnerable populations if at least six months have passed since their last dose:

- Individuals aged 70 and over (born in 1951 or earlier);
- Health care workers and designated essential caregivers in congregate settings (including long-term care home and retirement home staff and designated caregivers);
- Individuals who received a complete series of a viral vector vaccine (two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine or one dose of the Janssen vaccine); and
- First Nation, Inuit and Métis adults and their non-Indigenous household members.

Booster doses are being offered to these groups based on evidence of gradual waning immunity six months after receiving their second dose and a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Starting on Saturday, November 6 at 8:00 a.m., eligible individuals will be able to book their booster dose appointment through the [COVID-19 vaccination portal](#) or by calling the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre, directly through public health units that use their own booking systems, through Indigenous-led vaccination clinics, [select pharmacies](#), and primary care settings. Hospital-based health care workers are encouraged to reach out to their hospital employer to get vaccinated directly through their hospital's vaccination program.

The City of Kawartha Lakes will be using the provincial booking system with two clinic sites. One in Lindsay and one in Fenelon Falls. The Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit Medical Officer of Health, Dr Natalie Bocking says this will not impact the definition of being "fully vaccinated". She says two doses are still considered "fully vaccinated".

In addition, Ontario is once again supporting northern and remote fly in First Nation communities by launching Operation Remote Immunity 3.0, this time through the co-development of plans with Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, to support Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority and Weeneebayko Area Health Authority, First Nation health organizations, to administer booster doses in their communities with transportation and vaccine supply assistance from Ornge and local public health units.

The province says it is prepared to expand eligibility for a booster dose to all Ontarians over time. Based on Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination rollout for first and second doses, expansion of eligibility for booster doses will be based on age and risk, with an interval of six to eight months from the second dose.

"Ontario is continuing the success of our vaccine rollout by expanding eligibility for a booster shot based on age and risk," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "As we continue rolling out our Last Mile Strategy to vaccinate as many Ontarians as possible, providing an extra layer of protection starting with our most

vulnerable is critical as we continue to safely reopen and manage COVID-19 for the long-term.”

During the height of Ontario’s COVID-19 vaccine rollout, a large population of Ontarians received their first and second doses at a longer interval than indicated on the product monograph. This longer interval has now been shown to improve duration of protection, and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization now recommends an optimal interval of eight weeks between first and second doses officials say.

“The expansion of eligibility for booster shots is one more step that our government is taking to protect Ontarians and keep our communities safe,” said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. “As with the initial administration of COVID-19 vaccines, the phased rollout of booster shots ensures that vulnerable groups are prioritized and can easily access booster shots through pharmacies, clinics and health care providers.”

COVID-19 vaccine eligibility for children aged five to 11 is subject to Health Canada approval. Ontario is working with public health units across the province to prepare to vaccinate children aged five to 11. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children aged five to 11 is a distinct formulation at a lower dose and supply of vaccine that will be rolled out in parallel to booster doses.