

The following questions were those most frequently asked by residents and Members of Council from January 4, 2021 to present. These FAQs will be updated regularly as new details emerge from all levels of government.

It is important to note that new information on COVID-19 vaccines is emerging from the senior levels of government every day. Federal and provincial vaccine distribution timelines are in flux given the limited supply of vaccines currently available.

### 1. When will people in Ottawa start getting vaccinated against COVID-19?

- a. The Ottawa Hospital administered the city's first COVID-19 vaccine on December 15, 2020. Since then, thousands of vaccines have been administered in Ottawa to higher-risk populations and those that care for them in accordance with the [Province's phased approach to vaccine rollout](#).

### 2. Who is determining who can get a COVID-19 vaccine and when?

- a. The Government of Canada is responsible for approval and procurement of COVID-19 vaccine supply. The Government of Ontario is responsible for the distribution of these vaccines across the province. The [Ethical Framework for COVID-19 vaccine distribution](#) guides how the provincial government prioritizes and distributes vaccines across Ontario.

### 3. When will I be eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine, and who comes next in Ottawa?

- a. The Province has started to roll out a three-phased vaccine distribution implementation plan as follows:

**Phase 1 – Starting December 2020:** Limited doses of the vaccine available for residents, essential caregivers, staff and other employees of long-term care homes, retirements homes, and other congregate settings caring for seniors at high-risk; eligible health care workers in accordance with the [Ministry of Health guidance](#); first Nation communities and urban Indigenous populations, and adult chronic home care recipients.

**Phase 2 – Starting March 2021:** Increasing stock of vaccines, available to older adults, beginning with those 80 and older, people who live and work in high-risk congregate settings (for example, shelters, community living), frontline essential workers, including first responders, teachers, food processing workers, individuals with high-risk chronic conditions and their caregivers, and other populations and communities who are at greater COVID-19 risk.

**Phase 3 – Starting August 2021:** Vaccines available widely across Ontario for anyone in the general population who wants to be immunized.

These timelines are subject to change subject to possible additional vaccine approvals and supply. Please check the provincial website for the latest on [vaccine distribution in Ontario](#). These decisions are made by the Province and subject to vaccine availability from the Federal government. For more information on vaccine sequencing in Ottawa, please visit Ottawa Public Health's [website](#).

In the coming weeks, the focus will be to administer second doses to those who have already received their first dose of the vaccine. The timeline for completion is dependent on the supply of vaccine the city receives from the Province.

As supply allows, the focus will shift to higher risk retirement homes identified by OPH in accordance with the ethical framework. Select congregate care settings for older adults and high-risk healthcare workers will follow under Phase 1 of the Provincial approach. Other Phase 1 populations to be immunized are adult members of First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities and adults with chronic home care.

**4. I am an older adult, but I don't live in a long-term care or retirement home. When can I be vaccinated against COVID-19?**

- a. Older adults, beginning with those 80 and older and decreasing in five-year increments over the course of the vaccine rollout are expected to be offered vaccines starting in March 2021, depending on availability of vaccines.

**5. I am an essential worker. When can I be vaccinated against COVID-19?**

- a. Frontline essential workers, including: first responders, teachers and other education staff and food processing workers are expected to be offered vaccines in Phase 2 from March to July 2021. Specific timing will depend on availability of vaccines. The Provincial task force will use the ethical framework and the best available data to identify other priority populations within this phase, based on available vaccine supply.

**6. When can the general public get vaccinated against COVID-19?**

- a. Starting August 2021, and depending on availability of vaccines, it is anticipated that all remaining Ontarians in the general population who wish to be vaccinated will be offered a COVID-19 vaccine.

**7. Where will I be able to get vaccinated against COVID-19?**

- a. Various strategies will be used to distribute and administer vaccines across Ottawa, based on the quantity and type of vaccines received throughout 2021. The primary locations will include hospital clinics, community clinics,

pharmacies, mobile vaccination teams, primary health care providers like family doctors and by other health care professionals such as nurses working in congregate living settings, including long-term care homes and shelters.

## **8. Where will the community clinics be located?**

- a. The City of Ottawa and Ottawa Public Health have pre-identified four locations for community clinics to administer vaccines:
  - Horticulture Building, 1525 Princess Patricia Way
  - Eva James Memorial Centre, 65 Stonehaven Drive
  - Peter Clark Facility, 255 Centrum Boulevard
  - Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Avenue

The City will open additional clinics if vaccine supply allows. The City in collaboration with Ottawa Public Health will also deploy mobile vaccination teams to areas of the city that are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

## **9. When will the community clinics open?**

- a. The city's community clinics are not currently in operation. They are ready to open subject to vaccine availability. Under the Province's phased approach to vaccine roll-out, these community clinics are unlikely to be operational until Phase 2 (starting March 2021), depending on availability of vaccines. More details will follow in the coming weeks.

Once open, the four pre-identified community clinics will have the capacity to administer 1,200 vaccines per day at each clinic. They will operate 7-days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to ensure resident access.

## **10. Is there a list I need to be on to get the vaccine?**

- a. No. The City of Ottawa and Ottawa Public Health will undertake robust public information campaigns to keep residents informed on the vaccine rollout locally.

## **11. How will I be notified when it's my turn to get the vaccine?**

- a. Right now, vaccine supply is very limited. As supply is expected to increase in the coming months, the City of Ottawa and Ottawa Public Health will be communicating through various media channels on who is eligible to present where for vaccination.

## **12. Is getting the COVID-19 vaccine voluntary?**

- a. Yes. COVID-19 vaccines will not be mandatory, but you are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated.

### **13. What can I do now and how can I help?**

- a. It will be several months until a vaccine is available to the general public. In the meantime, it is essential that we all continue to do our part to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in the community: limit your close contacts to those within your household, practice physical distance, wear a mask, wash your hands, stay home except for essential reasons and follow local and Provincial guidance.

Until vaccines are widely available, it remains important to take steps to protect yourself, your loved ones and our community against COVID-19. Learn more about things you can do to reduce virus spread by following OPH on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. To keep up-to-date with the latest information, follow "[COVID Decoded](#)" with Dr. Trevor Arenson, on OPH's YouTube channel.

### **14. How do I decide if vaccination is the right choice for me and my family?**

- a. Feeling worried or hesitant is completely normal when something is new. Vaccination is a personal choice, and one that most Canadians agree is an important part of maintaining good health and for disease prevention.

### **15. Why should I get vaccinated against COVID-19?**

- a. Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread and reduce the impact of infectious diseases. Safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 are becoming available to protect us against COVID-19. While many people infected with COVID-19 experience only mild illness, others may get a severe illness or even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you are not considered to be at increased risk of severe complications. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience the illness itself.

### **16. Will I need to continue wearing mask after being vaccinated?**

- a. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue practicing [public health measures](#) to help stop the spread of COVID-19. That means covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often and never touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, staying at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from others and self-isolating when sick. Health care and other staff must still wear personal

protective equipment (PPE) when working, even after they have been vaccinated.

**17. Can people who have already tested positive for COVID-19 get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

- a. Yes. Those who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 should still be vaccinated and people do not need COVID-19 testing prior to vaccination.

**18. How long until “things are back to normal”?**

- a. COVID-19 vaccination, along with continued public health measures, will offer the best protection from the spread of COVID-19. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines afford before determining any change in public health guidelines. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect these decisions.

Once a person is vaccinated with the series of two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, they should continue following public health measures like wearing a mask, physical distancing and self-isolating when they become sick.

**19. How are we engaging the community and specific groups like Indigenous, seniors, racialized communities?**

- a. The City of Ottawa Emergency Operations Centre has established a Community Engagement Task Force. The goal of this Task Force is to use community engagement approaches to inform the Vaccination Plan and to encourage and support populations at highest risk and facing additional barriers to attend vaccination clinics. This will involve sharing culturally appropriate, and accessible information with diverse populations to promote vaccine uptake and address vaccine hesitancy and engaging with communities through existing networks to ensure their perspectives and needs are considered in the planning process for vaccine implementation

**More information**

- [Ottawa Public Health – COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [Vaccines Work- Myths about vaccines](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine safety](#)
- [Getting a COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario](#)