Compiled by: Niraj Maulkhan, PharmD, RPh - TC FHT's Clinical Pharmacist

Reviewed By: Exec. Dir./Lead Physicians

On a regular basis, this FAQ document about the COVID-19 vaccine and its availability will be updated. Questions have been chosen using multiple sources (e.g., Gov't of Canada, Toronto Public Health, Ontario College of Pharmacists, Ontario College of Family Physicians, etc.) and also from patient questions. Content will be added and updated so please check back regularly.

Reviewed: May 5, 2021

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Appendix A: Who can receive the COVID-19 vaccine and how can I book?

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1. Who can receive the COVID-19 vaccine and how can I book?

Ontario's plan prioritizes vaccines for those at greatest risk of severe illness and those who care for them. Please see Appendix A for:

- a complete list of those currently eligible to receive the vaccine in the City of Toronto
- a list of Toronto's hotspot locations
- information on pre-registration

Because eligibility will change, please check the most current information about who is being vaccinated in Ontario at: https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/

For the most current information specific to the Toronto Public Health Unit please visit: <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-protect-yourself-others/covid-19-protect-yourself-oth

If you live or work outside of Toronto, please check with your public health units as some regions may be at a different point in their vaccine rollout plan.

You can find your Public Health Unit here: https://www.phdapps.health.gov.on.ca/phulocator/

For more information on Ontario's vaccination rollout, please refer to: https://covid-19.ontario.ca/ontarios-covid-19-vaccination-plan#phase-1

2. Do I need a letter from my physician proving highest/high-risk conditions that are listed for priority vaccination?

As per Appendix A – page 16, if you are pre-registering with a hospital, staff will verify your information when your vaccine appointment is booked. Proof of pre-existing illness is NOT required at time of vaccination. There is no need for a 'doctor's note' to confirm a condition.

3. Will Taddle Creek Family Health Team (TCFHT) be providing the COVID-19 Vaccine?

At this time TC FHT is NOT providing the COVID-19 vaccine, however we are participating in the city of Toronto's mass vaccination clinics and pop-up clinics in the community. With vaccine supply increasing, more vaccines are available in a wide variety of ways including some family practices across Ontario. If at any point TC FHT is to provide COVID-19 vaccine we will let you know.

4. Which vaccine should I receive?

Please take the first vaccine offered to you. They are <u>all very effective at preventing severe</u> <u>disease</u>, <u>hospitalization and death from to COVID-19</u>. Please note that pharmacies are providing the AstraZeneca vaccine at this time.

For more information on vaccine effectiveness and what that means in real world terms, this 7-minute video provides an excellent summary: https://youtu.be/K3odScka55A

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5. Is the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Health Canada and Thrombosis Canada continue to recommend AstraZeneca (in Canada we have received CovidShield) as a safe vaccine for those turning 40 in 2021 or older. Rare cases of unusual types of blood clots have been found to occur 4-20 days after AstraZeneca vaccination. The incidence of these is extremely low at 1 in 100,000. This appears to be an immune-mediated reaction as it does not seem to occur in people with any risks of blood clots (family history, personal history or know clotting or bleeding problems).

The benefits of AstraZeneca vaccination continue to outweigh the risks. We encourage everyone to get immunized with any of the COVID-19 vaccines when they are eligible. Keep in mind that COVID-19 has killed over 24,000 Canadians so far, that about 1 in 100 Canadians who get COVID-19 end up needing intensive care, and that 1 in 5 Canadians who are hospitalized with COVID-19 develop blood clots. Currently Canada is experiencing a third wave of COVID-19 and these vaccine-related clots are very rare. The AstraZeneca vaccine has proven effective at reducing severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

Reference:

https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/vaccine-induced-prothrombotic-immune-thrombocytopenia-vipit-following-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccination-lay-summary/

 $\frac{https://thrombosiscanada.ca/wp-uploads/uploads/2021/04/AstraZeneca-COVID-19-Vaccine-Statement-April-2-2021-Final-ver.pdf$

https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/epidemiological-summary-covid-19-cases.html

6. Can a patient who received the AstraZeneca vaccine now receive the Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna as the second dose?

The safety and effectiveness of interchanging vaccines are not currently known. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends that for COVID-19 vaccines that require 2 doses, the second vaccine dose should be the same vaccine product as the first dose.

7. I have allergies, so is it safe for me to get the vaccine?

Over 14 million COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in Canada as of May 3rd, 2021. Serious adverse events and anaphylaxis are very rare with the COVID-19 vaccines, occurring in only 0.009% of doses given. Unless you have a history of allergic reaction to components of the vaccine, or to the first dose of the vaccine, Health Canada recommends vaccination.

When you receive a vaccination, it is always advised to wait at least 15 minutes after receiving a vaccine, since an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis is possible. For those with a history of allergies, even to food, pets or other non-medical causes, waiting 30 minutes after receiving a vaccine is recommended.

By clicking the vaccine name below you can review the vaccine ingredients in non-medical terms and <u>learn more about polyethylene glycol</u>.

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Pfizer-BioNTech
Moderna
AstraZeneca
Johnson & Johnson

Reference:

Centre for Effective Practice: https://tools.cep.health/tool/covid-19-vaccines/#allergicreaction

8. Can I receive other vaccines at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine?

A waiting period before and after receiving another type of vaccine is recommended so that any side effects from one vaccine are not confused with side effects of another. The recommendation is to wait at least 14 days after receiving another vaccine before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and at least 28 days after receiving each COVID-19 vaccine dose before receiving another vaccine based on recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

9. Why do I need to wait 16 weeks or 4 months between COVID-19 Vaccine doses?

The 16-week interval between doses is intended to protect more Ontarians, more quickly. Due to limited supply, for the vast majority of people, second doses for the 2-dose vaccines in Canada have now been prolonged to a maximum of 16 weeks to ensure more people can receive the first dose of the vaccine. This decision was made by Canada's Chief Medical Officer of Health based on recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

10. Can I take medication for pain after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine injection?

Side effects such as shoulder pain or fever are generally mild and should only last a few days. Applying a cool damp cloth where the vaccine was given may help with soreness.

If needed, you may use over-the-counter medicine such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, acetylsalicylic acid (ASA), or antihistamines for any pain and discomfort you may experience <u>after</u> receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and you have no other medical reasons that prevent you from taking these medications. It is not recommended to take these medications <u>before</u> vaccination for the purpose of trying to prevent side effects.

11. How long after having had COVID-19 can one get the vaccine?

While there is not a mandatory waiting period between having COVID-19 disease and being immunized, it is recommended that people wait until they are feeling better, with no symptoms of a new illness (such as recent fever or cough).

Additionally, symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals who have been advised to self-isolate due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection or due to close contact with a COVID-19 case should not attend a vaccine clinic and should wait to get their vaccine until their isolation period is over.

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Reference:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19 vaccine info sheet.pdf

https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html

12. Should a patient who had COVID-19 previously still receive the full course of the two-dose vaccine (versus a single dose only)?

For now, those who have previously had COVID should get a full course of the vaccine. It is still uncertain how long protection or immunity against the COVID-19 virus will last in these individuals.

13. Does the vaccine stop transmission of the virus? Can vaccinated people gather together with others who are vaccinated?

Although the vaccine will protect you, at this time it hasn't been proven that getting vaccinated will stop you from carrying the virus and possibly infecting others. Given the current evidence, after vaccination one should continue to follow all public health measures, including physical distancing, wearing a mask and hand hygiene. Socializing with people in other households is still discouraged for now.

14. How long does the protection conferred by the vaccine(s) last?

Because the vaccines are relatively new, we don't know for sure how long the vaccines are protective and whether/when a booster may be needed. Information is being collected now in real time and research is ongoing to determine how long immunogenicity lasts.

15. What is the latest on vaccines for pregnant women?

Pregnant women were not part of the clinical trials for the vaccines. The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada has stated the vaccine should be offered to pregnant women: "the documented risk of not getting the COVID-19 vaccine outweighs the theorized and undescribed risk of being vaccinated during pregnancy or while breastfeeding".

Pregnant individuals are now eligible to book their vaccines in Ontario at city immunization clinics and hospital immunization clinics. This comes as a response to the increase risk for severe illness for pregnant women infected with COVID-19.

Pregnant individuals who have their second dose scheduled on or after your expected date of delivery. You may move your appointment up to 1 month prior to your expected date of delivery. You may book the appointment at https://forms.uhn.ca/PublicForms/Form/VcACR Please note you will be asked to provide a note from your primary care provider to be presented at your second dose appointment.

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16. When will the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 Vaccine be available and what are the risks associated it?

The Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine has been approved in Canada since March 5, 2021. Canada received 300,000 doses on April 26, however on April 30 Health Canada announced it was holding back the rollout of the vaccine due to quality concerns. These J&J doses will only be released for distribution once Health Canada ensures they have met its "high standards for quality, safety and efficacy".

We know the J&J vaccine's side effects are similar to other vaccines and are mild to moderate. Common side effects include pain at the site of injection, body chills, feeling tired and feeling feverish.

There have been reports of extremely rare blood clots reported within 13 days after receiving the Johnson and Johnson Covid-19 vaccine. In the U.S. there have been six very rare blood clot cases among nearly 7 million doses administered. Health Canada has ensured that the benefits continue to outweigh the risks at this time.

 $\frac{https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/janssen.html}{https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/JJUpdate.html}$

17. Can I receive my second dose earlier if I am a higher risk individual?

Some hospitals such as UHN, are providing the second COVID-19 vaccination earlier for higher risk individuals meeting the follow criteria:

- Only the following groups of people have special approval from the Ministry of Health to receive the second dose in less than 16 weeks:
 - o those who received a solid organ transplant
 - o those who received a stem cell transplant
 - o those getting chemotherapy, immunotherapy or targeted therapy treatment for cancer.

Important: Please ask your healthcare provider for a letter confirming your medical condition. You must bring this letter to the second dose appointment.

- People getting radiation or hormonal treatment for cancer do not have special approval and will get the second dose up to 16 weeks after the first dose.
- At this time hospitals will only accommodate requests for second dose appointment changes for the following reasons:
 - Essential work related travel to a region that does not offer the vaccine and you will not have returned within the 4 month interval.
 - Patient who has received solid organ or stem cell transplant, and/or stable patient undergoing active treatment for cancer (getting chemotherapy, immunotherapy or targeted therapy treatment for cancer).

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Please note you will be asked to provide a note from your primary care provider to be presented at your second dose appointment.

 Pregnant individual, with your second dose scheduled on or after your expected date of delivery. You may move your appointment up to 1 month prior to your expected date of delivery.

If you are eligible for an earlier second dose, you may book you appointment at https://forms.uhn.ca/PublicForms/Form/VcACR

In summary, the vaccines are safe and effective. We will continue to monitor the vaccine rollout and provide you with the most relevant science-based information as soon as we have it available to us.

Please remember, our healthcare professionals and offices remain accessible to you by phone or in person visits (if deemed necessary). Thank you all for what you have done to keep yourselves, your loved ones, and your communities safe.

Appendix A: Who can receive the COVID-19 vaccine and how can I book?

Group	Where you can access your vaccine
Pregnant Individuals	City Immunization Clinics by calling the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at 1-833-943-3900 or booking online. Some Hospital Immunization Clinics are also booking for pregnant individuals.
Adults age 18 or older (born in 2003 and earlier) – not living in hotspot locations	Starting Week of May 24, 2021 (depending on vaccine supply) Information about how to access your vaccine will be posted when available.
Adults age 18 or older (born in 2003 and earlier) who live in COVID-19 hot spot postal codes (see below)	Ontario Health Teams and hospital mobile clinics and pop-ups to be announced at a later date.
Adults aged 30 or older (born in 1991 and earlier)	Starting Week of May 17, 2021 (depending on vaccine supply) Information about how to access your vaccine will be posted when available.
Adults aged 40 and older who are accessing the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine	<u>Pharmacies</u>
Adults aged 40 or older (born in 1981 and earlier)	Staring Week of May 10, 2021 (depending on vaccine supply) Information about how to access your vaccine will be posted when available.
Adults age 50 or older (born in 1971 and earlier)	City Immunization Clinics and Hospital Immunization Clinics are also booking appointments for adults aged 50 and older who live in hot spot postal codes. Please review the eligibility criteria for each hospital site.
Adults aged 60 and older (born in 1961 and earlier)	City Immunization Clinics and Hospital Immunization Clinics and some health partner clinics Call the Provincial Vaccine Information Line at 1-888-999-6488

Group	Where you can access your vaccine
Residents, staff and essential caregivers in long-term care homes	Residents are being vaccinated in their homes, at hospitals and other points of care. Essential caregivers and staff may be vaccinated alongside residents or invited to nearby hospital clinics.
Residents, staff and essential caregivers in congregate living settings for seniors, including high-risk retirement homes	Residents are being vaccinated in their homes. Essential caregivers and staff may be vaccinated alongside residents or invited to nearby hospital clinics.
	Mobile teams are being deployed to congregate care sites from Ontario Health teams.
Residents and staff in other congregate care settings for seniors, including all other retirement homes and assisted living	Residents are being vaccinated in their homes. Essential caregivers and staff may be vaccinated alongside residents or invited to nearby hospital clinics.
Frontline health care workers in <u>all risk</u> groups	Hospital Immunization Clinics OR Contact the call centre at 1-888-385-1910
Adults who are receiving ongoing home care	Hospital Immunization Clinics and home visits for homebound clients OR Contact the call centre at 1-888-385-1910
Adults in First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations	Hospital Immunization Clinics and Indigenous-led clinics and mobile teams OR Contact the call centre at 1-888-385-1910 OR Book online at City Immunization Clinics
People experiencing homelessness staying in shelters at high-risk of outbreaks (on a rolling basis, to be identified by Toronto Public Health and based on vaccine supply and other prioritization criteria)	Mobile teams organized by Ontario Health Teams
Faith leaders who as part of their regular role are at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 through close contact with persons and families in the following circumstances:	Hospital Immunization Clinics OR Contact the call centre at 1-888-385-1910

Group	Where you can access your vaccine
 End of life care Care of the deceased, funerals, bathing, or other ceremony with direct contact with deceased persons Home visits to unwell persons Pastoral care in hospitals/LTCHs/RHS or other vulnerable settings 	
People with the following highest-risk health conditions:	
 Organ transplant recipients; Hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients; People with neurological diseases in which respiratory function may be compromised (e.g., motor neuron disease, myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis); Haematological malignancy diagnosed less than one year ago; Sickle cell disease; Kidney disease eGFR< 30; and One essential caregiver for individuals in the groups listed above. 	Hospital Immunization Clinics OR Contact the call centre at 1-888-385-1910 OR Book online at City Immunization Clinics
People with the following <u>high risk</u> health conditions:	
 Obesity (BMI > 40) Other treatments causing immunosuppression (e.g., chemotherapy, immunity weakening medications) Intellectual or developmental disabilities (e.g., Down Syndrome) 	Hospital Immunization Clinics OR Contact the call centre at 1-888-385-1910 OR Book online at City Immunization Clinics
One essential caregiver is eligible for vaccination for individuals in this group listed above. The caregiver provides regular and	

Group	Where you can access your vaccine
sustained assistance with personal care and/or activities of daily living.	
People who live and work in high-risk congregate care settings not included in Phase 1 (e.g. supportive housing), including shelters, respites and encampments	People who live or work in these settings may receive their vaccine at the setting or may be eligible to receive their vaccine at one of the Hospital Immunization Clinics Please review the eligibility criteria for each hospital site. OR Contact the call centre at 1-888-385-1910
Elementary and secondary education workers who:	
 Work in a COVID-19 hotspot in Toronto (see postal codes below). Education workers in this group will require a letter from their school or school board; Support students with special education needs. Education workers in this group will require a letter from their school or school board; or Live in a Toronto hot spot (see postal codes below). Education workers in this group will have to provide proof of residency at an address in the hot spot and proof of education employment (e.g. pay stub). 	Eligible education workers can book by calling the Provincial Vaccine Information Line at 1-833-943-3900. OR Book online at City Immunization Clinics
Child care workers in licensed child care settings	Child care workers in licensed child care settings can book at City Immunization Clinics by calling the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at 1-833-943-3900.
	OR Online at City Immunization Clinics.
	Eligible workers in licensed child care settings will receive a letter from their employer. This letter must be available at

Group	Where you can access your vaccine
	the point of booking and taken to the vaccination appointment.
Frontline workers who cannot work from home – Group One: • Elementary and secondary school workers (including educators, custodial, school bus drivers, administrative staff) • Workers responding to critical events (including police, fire, special constables, children's aid society workers, emergency management, critical infrastructure restoration workers) • Enforcement, inspection and compliance roles (including by-law enforcement, building inspectors, animal welfare inspectors, border inspection officers, labour inspectors, WSIB field workers) • Individuals working in child care (including all licensees, employees, and students on educational placements who interact directly with children in licensed child care centres and in authorized recreation and skill building programs, licensed home child care and in-home service providers, employees of home child care agencies) • Foster care agency workers (including customary care providers) • Food manufacturing and distribution workers • Agriculture and farm workers • Agriculture and farm workers	Book online at City Immunization Clinics.

Group	Where you can access your vaccine
People with the following at-risk health conditions: Immune deficiencies/autoimmune disorders Stroke/cerebrovascular disease Dementia Diabetes Liver disease All other cancers Respiratory diseases Heart disease Hypertension with end organ damage Diagnosis of mental disorder Substance use disorders Sickle Cell Disease Thalassemia Immunocompromising health conditions Other disabilities – direct support care in community	Starting week of May 10, 2021 Hospital Immunization Clinics OR Book online at City Immunization Clinics
 Frontline workers who cannot work from home – Group Two: Essential and critical retail workers (including grocery, food bank, pharmacy, ServiceOntario, Service Canada, Passport Canada, wholesalers and general goods, restaurant, LCBO workers) Workers in manufacturing industries directly involved in supporting the COVID-19 response, construction (including infrastructure) and other essential businesses and services where facilities are at heightened risk for COVID-19 outbreaks and spread Social workers and social services staff who provide in-person client services (including youth justice workers, 	Week of May 10, 2021 (depending on vaccine supply) Information about how to access your vaccine will be posted when available.

Group	Where you can access your vaccine
Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support program case workers) Courts and justice system workers (including probation and parole workers) Transportation, warehousing and distribution workers (including public transit workers, taxi drivers, truck drivers supporting essential services, marine and rail cargo and maintenance, highway maintenance) Electricity (including system operations, generation, transmission, distribution and storage workers) Communications infrastructure workers (including cellular, satellite, landline, internet, public safety radio) Water and wastewater management workers Financial services workers (bank branch staff) Veterinarians and veterinary teams Waste management workers Oil and petroleum workers (including petroleum refineries, crude oil and petroleum storage, transmission and distribution, retail sale of fuel) Natural gas and propane gas workers (including compression, storage, transmission and distribution of natural gas and propane) Mine workers (including those needed to ensure the continued operation of active mines) Uranium processing workers (those working in the refining and conversion of uranium and fabrication of fuel for nuclear plants)	

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COVID-19 hot spot postal codes:

Hot spot areas are neighbourhoods identified by the Province of Ontario with ongoing and historic high rates of COVID-19 transmission, hospitalization and death. These areas were also identified by the province to have populations with higher risk factors including racialization, income, quality of housing, immigration status and education attainment.

The Province has identified these priority areas for increased vaccination efforts by first half of postal codes for those who are 50 years or older (born in 1971 or earlier). Fifty-three areas in Toronto are COVID-19 hot spots:

- M1B
- M1C
- M1E
- M1G
- M1H
- M1J
- M1K
- WITE
- M1L
- M1M
- M1P
- M1RM1S
- M1T
- M1V
- M1W
- M1X
- M2J
- M2M

- M2R
- M3A
- M3C
- M3H
- M3J
- M3K
- M3L
- M3M
- M3N
- M4A
- M4H
- M4X
- M5A
- M5B
- M5N
- M5VM6A
- M6B

- M6E
- M6H
- M6K
- M6L
- M6M
- M6N
- M8V
- M9A
- M9AM9B
- M9C
- M9L
- M9M
- M9N
- M9P
- M9R
- M9V
- M9W

Pre-Registration:

Some **Toronto Hospitals and Ontario Health Teams** are currently providing vaccination preregistration or appointments to individuals based on provincial prioritization guidance.

In our region (Mid-West Toronto), we are in Phase 3 of the Ontario COVID-19 vaccine strategy. This means that people in the **highest-risk and high-risk** health categories can now **pre-register** with the University Health Network for vaccination. Pre-registration is not a vaccine appointment – but it means you'll be contacted for an appointment once they start being scheduled. Here are the risk groups currently eligible for pre-registration.

- First Nations, Métis and Inuit Adults
- Recipient of Chronic Home Care
- Faith Leaders
- Organ transplant recipients
- Hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients
- People with neurological diseases that may compromise respiratory function

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- Haematological malignancy diagnosed < 1 year
- Kidney disease eGFR < 30
- Obesity (BMI > 40)
- Other treatments causing immunosuppression
- Intellectual or developmental disabilities
- Essential caregiver for a member of a priority group
- Immune deficiencies/autoimmune disorders
- Stroke/cerebrovascular disease
- Dementia
- Diabetes
- Liver disease
- All other cancers
- Respiratory diseases
- Spleen problems (e.g. asplenia)
- Heart disease
- Hypertension with end organ damage
- Diagnosis of mental disorders
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Substance use disorders
- Thalassemia
- Pregnancy
- Immunocompromising health conditions
- Other disabilities requiring direct support care in the community
- Age 50+ with postal code starting with M5V, M6E, M6H

Who can pre-register – and how to do it

To pre-register, you must be in one of the above risk groups. In addition, you must:

• Be a patient receiving care at UHN, Sinai Health, Women's College Hospital, or Toronto Grace Health Centre

OR

• live in, or have your primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) within the mid-west Toronto catchment area (South of Eglinton Avenue to the Waterfront, east of Roncesvalles Avenue, and west of Yonge Street) as defined by the Mid-West Toronto Ontario Health Team. (Patients of Taddle Creek fall under this group)

Pre-registration is only available if you meet the above criteria. Staff will verify your information when your vaccine appointment is booked. You will not be given an appointment if you do not meet the eligibility criteria. If you have a spouse or family member who is also eligible, they must register separately.

Here is the link to pre-register:

https://covidvaccine.uhn.ca/vaccination-registration-form

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If you prefer to pre-register by phone, you can do so by calling the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at 1-833-943-3900 (TTY 1-866-797-0007)

Because eligibility will change, please check the most current information about who is being vaccinated in Ontario at: https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/

For the most current information specific to the Toronto Public Health Unit please visit: <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-protect-yourself-others/covid-19-protect-yourself-oth

If you live or work outside of Toronto, please check with your public health units as some regions may be at a different point in their vaccine rollout plan.

You can find your Public Health Unit here: https://www.phdapps.health.gov.on.ca/phulocator/

For more information on Ontario's vaccination rollout, please refer to: https://covid-19.ontario.ca/ontarios-covid-19-vaccination-plan#phase-1