

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE #20 FROM HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH

TEL: 905-825-6000 • TOLL FREE: 1-866-442-5866 • FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, Pharmacists

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: March 17, 2021

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Update 20: 16 week interval between doses and Health Care Professional Town Hall

QUICK FACTS

- [Register today](#) for the virtual Health Care Provider Town Hall on COVID-19 vaccination in Halton. Join Dr. Hamidah Meghani, Medical Officer of Health for Halton Region, on Wednesday, March 24, 2021 from 5-6 p.m. for an update on the local COVID-19 vaccine rollout, followed by a question and answer session.
- Starting March 10, the Ontario government followed [recommendations from NACI](#) to extend the vaccination dose interval up to 16 weeks for the three two-dose vaccines currently approved by Health Canada (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD).
- Halton Region Public Health will be rescheduling previously scheduled second dose appointments and reaching out to people directly with their updated second dose appointment date and time.
- Residents of Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes will continue to receive their second dose of vaccine at the initial interval, due to their greater risks of both exposure to COVID-19 and serious illness and death. There are no other exceptions at this time.

WILL THE COVID-19 VACCINE STILL WORK WITH AN EXTENDED INTERVAL BETWEEN DOSES?

- Dr. Hamidah Meghani created [a two-minute video that helps address this question](#).
- Providing a first dose of vaccine to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible will save lives and prevent hospitalization.
- Current evidence from real-world experience with the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines indicates high vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 for two months after the first dose, including among health care workers, long term care residents, elderly populations and the general public. Clinical trials with the AstraZeneca/ COVISHIELD vaccine indicate that vaccine efficacy increases with the length of the interval between doses over 12 weeks.
- Based on immunological principles, vaccine science and modelling, this short-term protection is not expected to rapidly wane. The effectiveness of an extended dose interval will be monitored and assessed, including effectiveness against variants of concern.
- In general, extending the time between first and second doses does not reduce vaccine protection over the long term.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Centre for Effective Practice COVID-19 vaccine toolkit](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine updates for health care professionals](#), Halton Region
- [Ministry of Health Vaccine Information](#)
- [NACI rapid response: Extended dose intervals for COVID-19 vaccines to optimize early vaccine rollout and population protection in Canada](#)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES – IF YOU CAN'T ACCESS HYPERLINKS OR DIDN'T RECEIVE IN FULL, PLEASE EMAIL DOCTORS@HALTON.CA FOR ELECTRONIC COPY.



Health Care Provider Town Hall – COVID-19 vaccination

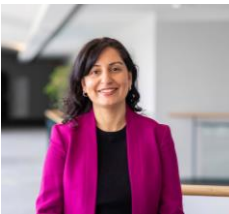
Hosted by Halton Region Public Health

Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Time: 5-6 p.m.

Register: Online ([registration form](#))

Join Halton Region Public Health for an update on the local COVID-19 vaccination rollout, followed by a question and answer session.



Dr. Hamidah Meghani

Medical Officer of Health, Halton Region Public Health



Dr. Deepika Lobo

Associate Medical Officer of Health, Halton Region Public Health
COVID-19 Disease Lead



Dr. Joanna Oda

Associate Medical Officer of Health, Halton Region Public Health
COVID-19 Vaccine Lead