

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE #23 FROM HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH

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

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

DATE: March 24, 2021

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Update 23: 70+ can book Friday, AstraZeneca safety, TB testing and vaccination

QUICK FACTS

- Starting Friday, March 26, Halton residents who are 70 years and older will be eligible to [book appointments](#), at any of the six Halton Region COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic sites
- If Tuberculosis screening is required, NACI recommends performing and reading the test prior to vaccination or delaying the tests until at least four weeks after immunization.
- While AstraZeneca (AZ) vaccine is not currently being administered in Halton Region, some of your patients may have received the AZ vaccine in other communities and have questions about its safety.
- [Health Canada](#) has assessed the data on reported events and determined that AZ vaccine has not been associated with an increase in overall risk of blood clots.

ASTRAZENECA SAFETY

- After reviewing the 20 million AZ vaccines completed so far in Europe and the United Kingdom, the [European Medicines Agency \(EMA\)](#), has said that AZ is a safe and effective vaccine and the benefits of the vaccine in protecting people from COVID-19 outweigh the risks of side effects.
- The [United Kingdom Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency](#) reports that 11 million doses of the AZ vaccine were administered in the United Kingdom and that they had not received more reports of blood clots than expected in the vaccinated population.

TB SCREENING AND COVID-19 VACCINES

- [NACI](#) provides the following recommendations regarding the timing of COVID-19 vaccine administration and Tuberculosis (TB) screening; specifically, Tuberculin skin testing (TST) or interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) testing. If IGRA or TST is necessary:
 - perform and read the test prior to vaccination or
 - delay the tests until at least four weeks after immunization.
- If these actions create a missed opportunity to screen for TB, then testing should not be postponed. In this case, health care providers should consider re-testing clients with negative results at least four weeks after immunization.
- NACI states these recommendations are based on the hypothetical risk that mRNA vaccines may create false-negative results by briefly influencing cell-mediated immunity.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines](#), National Advisory Committee on Immunizations
- [Suggested patient messaging on extended dose timing and AstraZeneca safety](#), Ontario College of Family Physicians
- [Thrombosis Canada statement on AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine and thrombosis](#), Thrombosis Canada
- [Reported side effects following COVID-19 vaccination in Canada](#), Health 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.