

HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

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TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

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

DATE: April 1, 2021

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Update 24: 65+ can book Wednesday, Updated Recommendations on Vaccine Interval, AstraZeneca vaccine should not be used in adults under 55 years of age

QUICK FACTS

- Starting Wednesday, March 31, 2021, Halton residents who are 65 years and older will be eligible to [book appointments](#), at any of the six Halton Region COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic sites.
- As of [March 26, 2021](#), the Province recommends that individuals with certain medical conditions (transplant recipients, malignant hematologic disorders and non-hematologic malignant solid tumors receiving active treatment) receive the COVID-19 vaccine at the dose interval indicated in [the product monograph](#).
- [National Advisory committee on immunization \(NACI\)](#) recommends AstraZeneca vaccine should not be used in adults under 55 years of age.
- [Ontario](#) will continue to offer the AstraZeneca vaccine to individuals aged 55 and older at pharmacies and primary care settings.

UPDATED RECOMMENDATIONS ON VACCINE INTERVAL

- The Provincial recommendation is based on guidance from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#).
- People with the conditions below should receive their second dose as per the product monograph:
 - Transplant recipients including solid organ transplants and hematopoietic stem cell transplants
 - Individuals with malignant hematologic disorders and non-hematologic malignant solid tumors receiving active treatment (chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy).
 - Excluding individuals receiving solely hormonal therapy or radiation therapy
- The Province will continue to monitor emerging research and real-world effectiveness studies.
- Halton Region is currently developing a process for these individuals to receive their vaccine on the recommended dose schedule. Once this process is finalized an update will be sent.

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 PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL DOCTORS@HALTON.CA.

VACCINE PRODUCT MONOGRAPH DOSE INTERVAL

- [Pfizer vaccine](#): 21 day authorized interval.
- [Moderna vaccine](#): 28 day authorized interval.
- [AstraZeneca vaccine](#): 4 to 12 weeks authorized interval.

ASTRAZENECA UPDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

- Rare cases of serious blood clots, including cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, have been reported in Europe after the use of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine. This adverse event is being referred to as Vaccine-Induced Prothrombotic Immune Thrombocytopenia (VIPIT).
- The cases identified were primarily in individuals under 55 years of age, occurring 4-16 days after receiving the vaccine.
- Cases are estimated at approximately [1 per 1,000,000](#) or [1 per 100,000](#). The case fatality of VIPIT is approximately 40%.
- It is not believed that VIPIT is more common in people who have a history of blood clots, family history, low platelets or pregnant women as VIPIT does not develop through the same process as usual types of bleeding or clotting problems. The mechanism of action is similar to heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT), although the exact mechanism is still under investigation.
- Health Canada and health agencies around the world are continuing to monitor the situation, recommendations will continue to be updated.
- [Adults aged 55 and older](#) may be offered the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine with informed consent.

KEY MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS

- The benefits of receiving the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine outweigh the risks.
- The rate of cases developing blood clots after receiving the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is low. COVID-19 has killed over 15,000 Canadians so far, about 1 in 100 Canadians who get COVID-19 end up in intensive care, and 1 in 5 Canadians who are hospitalized with COVID-19 [develop blood clots](#).
- Currently Canada is experiencing a third wave of COVID-19. VIPIT is very rare, while the AstraZeneca vaccine has proven effective at reducing severe illness from COVID-19.
- Individuals should seek medical attention if they develop the following symptoms after receiving the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine: Shortness of breath; chest pain; leg swelling; persistent abdominal pain; neurological symptoms (such as sudden onset of severe or persistent worsening headache or blurred vision); skin bruising; petechiae (small, red or purple spots on the skin).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Halton Region [COVID-19 Vaccine Updates for Healthcare professionals](#).
- Physician updates, including [COVID-19 Physician information](#).
- General information regarding the [COVID-19 vaccine](#).
- Additional Halton Region COVID-19 [resources](#).