

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE #12 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

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

DATE: February 26, 2021

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Update 12: 'Very High Priority' Halton Healthcare Workers aged 50+ now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination

QUICK FACTS

- Halton Region Public Health has now opened up COVID-19 vaccination appointments for Healthcare Workers in the [Very High Priority group](#), who are **50 years of age and over**. Please see attached notice and Frequently Asked Question documents.

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.

February 26, 2021

Halton Healthcare Workers 50 years and older now eligible for COVID-19 vaccine

Who is eligible?

Based on the Ministry of Health's guidance, people in the [Very High Priority Healthcare workers group](#), **who are 50 years of age** or older are now eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccination through the the Halton Healthcare Vaccination Centre at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital.

To be eligible, Healthcare workers must:

- **work in Halton Region at one of the settings listed below AND**
- **provide direct, in-person care to patients at least once a week AND**
- **be 50 years of age or older. Please note: proof of age will be required at your appointment.**

If you are not part of the prioritized group or are working remotely, please allow your colleagues to book appointments at this time. As vaccine supply increases, eligibility will be expanded.

Very High Priority Healthcare workers group:

- 1) Healthcare workers in acute care and other hospital settings.
- 2) Healthcare workers in congregate settings including:
 - Assisted living,
 - Correctional settings,
 - Residential facilities,
 - Hospices and palliative care settings,
 - Shelters, supportive housing.
- 3) Healthcare workers in community care:
 - Home and community care,
 - Adult day programs for seniors.
- 4) Healthcare workers providing community care serving the general population. This group includes office staff with direct contact with patients:
 - Primary care,
 - Walk-in clinics,
 - Community based specialists,
 - Nurse practitioner-led clinics / contract nursing agencies
 - Death investigation professionals,
 - Dentistry,
 - Pharmacies (those who work directly in the pharmacy).
 - Laboratory services, including office staff with direct contact with patients.

Please note those Healthcare workers in the **Highest Priority group of any age remain eligible** for the COVID-19 vaccine.

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How to book appointment

- If you are eligible, please call Halton Healthcare at 905-203-7965 to book your appointment.
- You will be asked to attest to your eligibility as a healthcare worker.
- Halton Healthcare will provide details of where to go and what to expect when you arrive.
- Your vaccine appointment will occur at the Halton Healthcare Vaccination Centre at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, located at 3001 Hospital Gate, Oakville, ON L6M 0L8.

Please bring to your appointment:

- Ontario Health card
- Proof of age, if not indicated on your Ontario Health card
- A completed Ministry consent form which can be accessed by this [link](#). Completing the consent form ahead of time will speed up the process at the clinic.

For additional information about the COVID-19 vaccine, please see the attached fact sheet or visit [Halton Region's COVID Vaccine website](#) at halton.ca/COVIDvaccines.

Thank you for your exceptional work during the pandemic and for your participation in this vaccine campaign.

Sincerely,

Halton Region Public Health

Regional Municipality of Halton

HEAD OFFICE: 1151 Bronte Rd, Oakville, ON L6M 3L1

905-825-6000 | Toll free: 1-866-442-5866



Frequently Asked Questions

February 26, 2021

Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization

Why are you using an age-based criteria for Healthcare Worker vaccination?

- We know that age is the greatest risk factor for severe outcomes related to COVID-19 disease, especially for those over 80, and that is why we are using the age-based criteria. People over the age of 60, are at greater risk of hospitalization.
- Our highest priority is on vaccinating the most vulnerable in our community, which is people over 80 years of age. To ensure an adequate vaccine supply for our older adults, we are using an age-based criteria to immunize our Healthcare Workers and expanding eligibility as quickly as we can.

Why are other Health Units administering vaccine to Healthcare Workers with no age restriction?

- We know it can be frustrating when you hear that other Healthcare Workers are receiving vaccine or that other Public Health Units are using different criteria than Halton Region.
- Depending on the type and amount of vaccine different Regions have, this will impact the ability to immunize various groups. To date, vaccine has been reallocated to areas hardest hit with COVID-19.
- The Province has advised us that vaccine distribution will be increasingly population-based allocation.
- Our experience in Halton is that people at greatest risk of severe disease (outside of long-term care and retirement homes) increases with age, and those at greatest risk are people over the age of 80. To ensure adequate vaccine supply for this most vulnerable group, we are using an age-based criteria to immunize our Healthcare Workers and expanding eligibility as quickly as we can.
- Many Health Units are currently 'registering' Healthcare Workers and will then be booking appointments based on priority eligibility once they receive vaccine supply.

Why isn't Halton Region Public Health creating a Healthcare Worker registration system?

- We had to decide if we wanted to spend resources on a Healthcare Worker registration system or an appointment booking program for the 80+ in our community in order to start vaccinations earlier.
- In order to protect our most vulnerable older adults in the community, we decided to develop the public appointment booking program.
- We will be communicating with Healthcare Workers through email campaigns, outreach from their professional Colleges and associations, media (print and online) and other channels.
- Some Public Health units already had registration infrastructure in place.

The Province says all Healthcare Workers should be getting immunized. Why isn't Halton immunizing all Healthcare Workers?

- The [COVID-19: Guidance for Prioritizing Healthcare Workers for COVID-19 Vaccination](#) states that:
 - Demand for COVID-19 vaccine will initially exceed available supply; prioritization must be set among healthcare workers
 - Sub-prioritization of healthcare workers will assist with vaccine delivery to healthcare workers in parallel with vaccination of other Phase 1 priority populations.

- Healthcare workers are prioritized based on risk of exposure, patient populations served and incidence of COVID-19 outbreaks.
- An ethics and equity lens should be applied to all prioritization decision-making.
- Halton Region Public Health will immunize all Healthcare Workers who want the COVID-19 vaccine. We are using an evidence-based system to immunize those at the highest risk of complications and death first.

I have a medical condition that places me at higher risk of COVID-19 complications. Can I get immunized before the age-based criteria?

- We know how stressful it can be to continue caring for patients when you have a pre-existing condition that could impact your health if you were to contract COVID-19.
- We also know that age is the greatest risk factor for severe outcomes related to COVID-19 disease and that is why we are using the age-based criteria.

How will I find out that I'm eligible to book a COVID-19 appointment?

- As more vaccine becomes available, we will communicate expanded eligibility with Healthcare Workers through email campaigns, outreach from their professional Colleges and associations, media (print and online) and other channels.