Pharmacy FAQs on COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility

June 22, 2021 – UPDATE

(Note: Changes mainly pgs. 3-4 re. mixing brands, AstraZeneca guidance, change to min. 28-day interval)

1. If someone has had COVID-19, do they need to wait 90 days before they receive their vaccine?
   No – earlier guidance called for a 90-day wait time, however that no longer applies. As long as the individual is recovered/no longer infectious they are able to be vaccinated.

2. When can my pharmacy start to administer second doses?
   Second dose immunizations began the week of May 17 and will overlap with the completion of first doses. When someone requests a second dose appointment, pharmacies should validate the vaccine product and date of the first dose in the eHR Viewer. Do not rely solely on information provided on the patient’s wallet card. See Q7 re. mixing vaccine brands.

3. Who is eligible to receive a second dose?
   Second doses will be offered by age and priority in the exact same order as the first doses were offered. Second dose availability began May 17 with age 85, and eligibility has been progressing downward through age categories. A chart with eligibility timing can be found here (it is also captured in Q6, although the website is the most current as changes may unfold quickly).

4. Are there any exceptions to second dose eligibility?
   There are two exceptional circumstances for receiving a second dose at a shortened interval from the provincial program. These individuals will receive a letter of confirmation in the mail from their physician or from the Government of Saskatchewan to present upon vaccination. AstraZeneca is not included in these exceptions at this time.

   1. Priority for second doses will be given to those diagnosed with or being treated for cancer and those who have received solid organ transplants.

   2. Patients starting or established on B cell depletion monoclonal antibody therapy (including rituximab and ocrelizumab) are eligible to receive their second doses with a minimum interval of 21 or 28 days from their first vaccine dose, depending on which vaccine they received.

Patients presenting second-dose letters for conditions other than those listed above are not eligible for priority vaccination. These patients must wait until either their age or sequenced order are announced.

All other residents who qualified for Phase One prioritization based on the clinically vulnerable status will receive their vaccines in the sequenced order, based on when they received their first dose.
5. **Should pharmacies be prioritizing first doses?**

Pharmacies should prioritize first doses where possible on a go-forward basis. They shouldn’t cancel appointments but as they work through their waitlists, they should fill appointments with first doses to start.

6. **How will the public know when it is their turn to receive a second dose?**

The schedule will be advertised in the daily case news release, on the Government of Saskatchewan site and social media channels, and through additional PSAs. Note that once a person is eligible to receive their second dose, they remain eligible. Everyone will receive an opportunity to be vaccinated.

The following table is a **guideline** for second dose eligibility; timelines may change due to vaccine availability. **Check the website often** as eligibility has been moving quickly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date eligibility changes</th>
<th>Eligible Age</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>Eligible Based on Date of 1st Dose (on or before)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-May</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>15-Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-May</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>1-Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-May</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>15-Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Jun</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>22-Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Jun</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>29-Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-June</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>7-Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-Jun</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>15-Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-Jun</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>1-May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-Jun</td>
<td>Eligibility opens based on date of first dose only</td>
<td></td>
<td>15-May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-Jun</td>
<td>Everyone age 12+, receiving 2nd dose 28 days from first dose</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples of eligibility:** During the week of May 30, someone who is 70 years old could be vaccinated with second dose, as well as anyone who was vaccinated with their first dose on or before March 15. Patients who qualify for a second dose based on their age may receive their second dose in alignment with the minimum interval of the vaccine product monograph.

When all persons 12 and older become eligible to receive their second doses starting June 24, **vaccinations will be provided on a 28 day interval between first and second dose, to ensure a consistent approach no matter the vaccine type.** Note that residents may
receive their second doses up to four months following their first dose but it's highly recommended that you receive your second dose as soon as you are eligible.

7. **Do patients need to match vaccine brands between first and second doses?**

On June 17, the National Advisory Council on Immunization updated their statement on recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccine, including recommendations for those who received AstraZeneca as a first dose. Saskatchewan will continue to allow residents the choice of receiving AstraZeneca as their second dose or an mRNA vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer). There are no first dose AstraZeneca clinics planned at this time; all AstraZeneca second dose clinics will be offered through the SHA and residents seeking AstraZeneca as their second dose can book those appointments as clinics are available.

- **AstraZeneca:** NACI prefers a second dose mRNA vaccine for those who received a first dose AstraZeneca. Saskatchewan’s approach is that people who received a first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine may receive either AstraZeneca vaccine or an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) for their second dose, unless contraindicated.

- **Pfizer, Moderna:** As advised by NACI, the Pfizer and Moderna (mRNA) vaccines are interchangeable. Saskatchewan’s approach is that residents who received Pfizer or Moderna as their first dose should take whichever of those two vaccines is available to them for their second dose, rather than waiting for the same brand of vaccine. This will provide residents with more options to be immunized sooner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidance on Interchanging Brands</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vaccine Brand 1st Dose</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vaccine Brand 2nd Dose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfizer</td>
<td>Pfizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderna</td>
<td>Moderna</td>
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<td>Pfizer</td>
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<td>Moderna</td>
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<tr>
<td>AstraZeneca</td>
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<tr>
<td>AstraZeneca</td>
<td>Pfizer</td>
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<tr>
<td>AstraZeneca</td>
<td>Moderna</td>
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Saskatchewan anticipates having an adequate supply of vaccine in order to provide residents with the second dose they prefer. All vaccines approved in Canada are effective. **All residents need to receive both doses of the two-dose vaccines in order to achieve the best possible protection.**
8. **If a patient received a first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, should they receive AstraZeneca for their second dose – or another COVID-19 vaccine?**

   *That is their choice.* As noted in the previous question, NACI has made recommendations in support of mixing brands between first and second doses.

   Individuals are not required to receive AstraZeneca as a second dose. Anyone who received AstraZeneca as a first dose is eligible to receive a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine for their second dose if that is their preference, unless there are contraindications.

9. **Will pharmacies be administering AstraZeneca?**

   Not at this time.

   The Saskatchewan Health Authority began establishing clinics June 6 for second doses of AstraZeneca to anyone who is eligible, according to the provincial age eligibility and date of first dose. AstraZeneca is no longer being administered for first doses except for those who present with contraindications to mRNA vaccines. Details on clinic locations and hours will be announced in advance. **Note that not all vaccine types are available at all clinic locations; vaccine type available by clinic is listed when that clinic is advertised.**

10. **Will the same groups that were eligible in Phase 1 and Phase 2 for first doses be specifically prioritized for second doses?**

    No. Second doses will be offered by age and date of the first dose.

    Second doses will be offered based on where an individual fell in the roll-out sequence.

    There will be no specific prioritization of second doses for healthcare workers (HCWs) or front-line workers.

11. **Do we still need to identify the HCW in the Vaccine Risk Factor Portal for second doses?**

    Yes, still identify the HCW risk factor for second doses, the same way that was handled for first doses.

12. **What about first or second doses; will groups still need to present proof of employment or an eligibility letter to receive the vaccine?**

    No. Now that first dose eligibility has opened to everyone over 12 years of age, proof of employment is no longer required. Individuals are now eligible for their first dose based on age. Second dose eligibility is based on age or on the date of their first vaccine.

13. **What if someone does not remember the date they received their first dose/lost their wallet card?**
Pharmacists should always confirm a client’s immunization history on the eHR Viewer, even when a wallet card is presented.

If the patient does not know the date or has misplaced the wallet card provided at the time of their first dose, they can call 1-833-SaskVax (1-833-727-5829) to obtain the date. Pharmacies can also encourage the public to check their Immunization History on their MySaskHealthRecord account. Pharmacists can provide a new wallet card and document the dates of first and second doses to complete the series.

14. Can I advertise which vaccine product is available at my pharmacy?

Absolutely! Pharmacies are encouraged to communicate the vaccine product available in their clinic to ensure easy accessibility for the public.

15. Will the vaccine products at each pharmacy be posted publicly on the Government of Saskatchewan website?

Yes, the brands, as well as urls, are listed on the pharmacy locator map. It can be found here. Drive-thru and walk-in locations will be advertised in the daily case news release, on the Government of Saskatchewan site and social media channels, and through additional PSAs.

16. What vaccine product can children ages 12-17 years receive and when are they eligible to be vaccinated?

Currently, the only approved vaccine for children is the Pfizer product. Eligibility opened to 12+ on Thursday, May 20. Anyone 12+ can now be vaccinated in Saskatchewan.

17. What if my pharmacy has not been allocated the Pfizer vaccine? Will we be expected to switch products in order to vaccinate youth 12-17?

At this point, no, pharmacies are not expected to start administering the Pfizer vaccine if they have not already been allocated this product.

To make sure the Pfizer vaccine is accessible to all children across the province, the Saskatchewan Health Authority rolled out a school-based program. The vaccine was made available to students through this delivery model, although not every school received immunizations. Some clinics took place directly at school, others involved bussing to another school, and some dedicated off-site clinics were also be offered (parents/youth were made aware of the specific delivery method). Youth 12+ are not limited to only the school program. Families may choose to be vaccinated together at a participating pharmacy that administers Pfizer, or at a drive thru or walk-in clinic hosted by the SHA.

If a class or student is on self-isolation due to a COVID exposure, they should not visit the school or pharmacy until they have cleared the isolation period.
18. **What if a child cannot participate in the school-based program to access the Pfizer vaccine, what are their options?**

If a child is not able to be vaccinated through the school-based program and the local pharmacy or drive thru/walk-in clinic does not have the Pfizer vaccine, the family will need to travel to a clinic or pharmacy that offers the appropriate product.

19. **Can I book appointments ahead of schedule, in anticipation of eligibility opening to a new age or date range?**

No, pharmacies should not be booking ahead in anticipation of additional eligibility opening. Eligibility is opening on a staggered approach to manage supply and demand and provide an equitable opportunity for individuals to obtain the vaccine.

Pharmacies can book appointments based on the eligibility that is open on the day the appointment is made, not according to the day the appointment is booked for. Pharmacies are encouraged to create a waiting list for future appointments.

20. **What do I do if I vaccinate someone and when I submit the claim, their HSN is invalid?**

- If that happens, please fill out a Notification of Vaccine Administration form and submit via email or fax (information is at the top of the form).


21. **Can I vaccinate patients from out of province?**

- Patients who present with an out-of-province health card are advised to obtain their vaccination through the SHA. If they are immunized at a pharmacy, the record will not be captured in real time, and the pharmacy cannot claim an immunization fee.

- If the patient inadvertently receives their vaccination at the pharmacy, the pharmacy must complete an *Out of Province COVID-19 Immunization Submission Form* and submit via email to eHealth.

- The form is found at [https://www.ehealthsask.ca/residents/oop-proofofVac/Documents/Panorama-OOP_COVID-19_Immunization_Submission-Form.pdf](https://www.ehealthsask.ca/residents/oop-proofofVac/Documents/Panorama-OOP_COVID-19_Immunization_Submission-Form.pdf)

22. **What are the wallet cards and stickers for?**

- The wallet cards are a reminder of the individual’s vaccination date and brand of vaccine, so they are aware of these details when they receive their second dose. The stickers are a visual validation of the individual’s vaccination.

- These pieces – the stickers in particular – have proven very popular with people taking selfies and posting the photos to their social media platforms. This further helps promote
the importance of vaccination and encourages individuals’ social media followers to also get vaccinated. A sticker may seem like a small thing, but it’s an important component of the vaccination strategy, encouraging protection against COVID-19.

- Wallet cards and stickers can be ordered through McKesson’s PharmaClik ordering system.

For more information, contact dpebimmunizations@health.gov.sk.ca