

Pediatric Vaccine Now Available & Omicron Variant of Concern – December 1, 2021

COVID-19 pediatric vaccines are now available for children ages 5 to 11. Parents must [register their children](#) and book an appointment at one of Island Health’s child-friendly clinics. While children are at a lower risk of severe disease from COVID-19, it can still result in serious outcomes in some children, including hospitalization and long-term symptoms. It is recommended that children aged 5 to 11 get vaccinated; which is the best protection for children and everyone. The pediatric vaccine will be provided at Island Health clinics, not in schools or pharmacies. There are approximately 54,000 eligible children in the Island Health region, thousands of whom already have appointments booked.



Island Health is finalizing a schedule to visit rural and remote communities in January for ‘whole community’ clinics to immunize eligible adults, youth and children. Invitations for booster doses are being sent to those age 70+ and Indigenous peoples 18+ who are 6-8 months past their second dose. Scheduled to start in January, people 18+ will be invited to book a booster dose 6-8 months after their second dose. You must wait until you receive an invitation and then schedule an appointment. Some pharmacies are now offering COVID-19 vaccines, and more are being added in the coming weeks. Appointments are required through the provincial booking system and can be booked online alongside health authority vaccine clinics. While appointments are strongly recommended for everyone, [health authority vaccine clinics](#) have drop-in availability for first doses for people 12 and up.

The first case of the Omicron variant of concern has been detected in BC, within the Fraser Health region, in a person with recent travel to Nigeria. Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry says whole genome sequencing is now being done on every positive sample if a person had recent international travel, which is how this case was detected. Dr. Henry says we can be confident that Omicron is not widespread in BC. Several updates to provincial health orders were outlined yesterday, including:

- The provincial masking order for indoor spaces now includes worship services.
- Worship services (except in Northern Health) must be limited to 50% capacity.

Island Health Region Total Vaccines Administered To Date	% Population Immunized (18+) 1st Dose To Date	% Population Immunized (12+) 1st Dose To Date	% Population Immunized (18+) 2nd Dose To Date
1,455,745	93.1%	92.9%	90.1%

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

[BCCDC Website Resource for COVID-19 Variants](#)

With the emergence of the Omicron variant, the BCCDC has updated information on their website.

[BCCDC Guidance on COVID-19 Vaccination for Children](#)

A helpful guide outlining pediatric vaccination benefits, eligibility, appointment process for kids.

[Clinical Practice Guide for Antimicrobial and Immunomodulatory Therapy in Adult Patients with COVID-19](#)

A dynamic practice guidance document from the BC COVID-19 Therapeutics Committee & Therapeutic Review and Advisory Working Group.

[BCCDC Approach to Assessment and Management of Long-term COVID-19 Symptoms in Primary Care](#)

This guidance is intended for family physicians and primary care nurse practitioners. It is based on known evidence as of August 5, 2021. Evidence on this topic is limited and rapidly evolving.

[Past Issues of the Island Health Primary Care Update](#)

The Island Health Archive for past issues of the Primary Care Update.

LINKS, RESOURCES & FAQs

BCCDC Resources:

- [New Today](#): This section of the website highlights the latest guidance documents and updates to the website for health professionals.
- [About the vaccines](#)
- [Resources for Health Professionals](#)
- [Reporting adverse events](#)

Doctors of BC:

- [Info for doctors getting or giving the vaccine](#)
- [Updated toolkit for doctors' offices](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

- [ImmunizeBC FAQ](#)