

March 1, 2021

Today the provincial government announced details of Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Immunization Plan and changes to the second dose interval. Island Health also distributed a survey to primary care providers to gather information from those who wish to be immunized.

APPOINTMENTS FOR SENIORS

- Starting this week Island Health will contact people living and working in independent living and seniors' supportive housing, as well as long-term home support clients of all ages, to book appointments. Appointments are also available for caregiving spouses (aged 70+) of people in this category. People in these groups do not need to call anyone to book an appointment. Clinics will be held on-site for independent living residents. Long-term home support clients will be scheduled to receive their vaccination at an Island Health clinic or in home, depending on their needs.
- Seniors 80+ and Indigenous people 65+ will be able to book their appointments this month. Eligibility in this group does not include spouses unless they are eligible by age. The call-in schedule to book appointments will be staggered by age groups to avoid long waits:
 - **March 8:** Seniors born in or before 1931 (90 years+)/Indigenous peoples born in or before 1956 (65 years+) may call to book their vaccine appointment,
 - **March 15:** Seniors born in or before 1936 (85 years+) may call to book their vaccine appointment, and
 - **March 22:** Seniors born in or before 1941 (80 years+) may call to book their vaccine appointment.
- There is no need to register before booking. Immunization clinic locations will be confirmed at time of booking, with vaccinations starting as early as March 15.
- A family member, caretaker, healthcare worker, advocate or friend can also book an appointment on their behalf.
- Island Health's appointment line for seniors is 1-833-348-4787. This phone line will open March 8th.
- To avoid long delays it is essential that people wait until they are eligible to contact the call centre.
- It is not possible to register for a vaccine appointment online at this time.
- Once a person is eligible to receive the vaccine they are always eligible. They will not miss their chance to be vaccinated.
- In Phase 3 (April to June) British Columbians will register and book their appointments to receive their first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccine through an online registration tool. People born between 1942 and 1946 (ages 79-75), and Indigenous peoples born between the years of 1956 and 1960 (ages 64-60), will be able to register for an appointment online or by phone by March 31, 2021.
- **Please help us share this important information with your patients and their families.**

PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER IMMUNIZATIONS

- Primary Care Providers are eligible for vaccination during Phase 2. Today Island Health shared a survey with the Divisions of Family Practice that will allow you and your medical office staff to declare interest in receiving the vaccine. Please check your email for your copy of the survey. Those who wish to be vaccinated will be contacted by Island Health's call centre to make an appointment.

CHANGES TO SECOND DOSE INTERVAL

- Dr. Henry announced today that BC is extending the interval between the first and second doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to four months (16 weeks).
- Dr. Henry said first dose effectiveness is about 90%.
- The decision to change the time between doses is based on BCCDC analysis of the data from BC's experience, as well as evidence from Quebec, Israel, the UK and conversations with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization.
- Extending the duration between first and second doses means we can provide first doses more quickly, increasing the immunity of the entire population.
- This change in provincial direction means upcoming second dose appointments will be cancelled.
- Primary care providers who work in long-term care or assisted living were eligible to receive their vaccine in Phase 1. If you have been booked for the next couple of days, you can expect a call cancelling your appointment. If you are waiting for a call, the timing has been extended by about 10 weeks.

MORE INFORMATION

www.gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst: for information about vaccine appointments for seniors in BC

www.gov.bc.ca for more information about B.C.'s COVID-19 Immunization Plan

www.gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst for more information about appointments for seniors

www.bccdc.ca for more information about the vaccines, side effects and frequently asked questions