



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

October 29, 2021

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COVID-19

COVID-19 immunization plan - next steps

On October 26, the Province released news that a third dose and booster shots of the COVID-19 vaccine will be available for all British Columbians 12+ beginning in January 2022. The Province will continue its COVID-19 immunization plan with first priority going to BC's elderly and most at-risk through to the December holiday.

Currently, the mRNA vaccines (Moderna Spikevax and Pfizer Comirnaty) are the two options for the third dose and booster shots. People who received the AstraZeneca vaccine initially will be offered an mRNA vaccine for their third dose or booster shots.

What's the difference?

A third dose is not the same as a booster. For people who do not develop the same immune response to the first two doses of the vaccine (some people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised), a third dose is needed to get a similar level of protection as others in the population. For these people, receiving a third dose to complete the initial vaccine series can help individuals create antibodies to protect them from COVID-19.

A booster dose is an additional non-urgent vaccine you may choose to get at a later date if the protection from the initial two-dose vaccine series begins to decrease over time. A booster gets immunity back up to a desirable level of protection for an extended period of time.

Booking a third dose or booster

To book a booster:

- Be registered in the [Get Vaccinated system](#)
- Book online when notified

- Call 1-833-838-2323 if there is difficulty accessing online booking

People needing a third dose [will be contacted](#) by the provincial Get Vaccinated system about how and when to book a third dose, about four weeks after you receive your second dose.

Booster shots and third doses will be by appointment only, they are not available for walk-ins.

For more detailed information, please see this information about third doses and booster shots

- [Why you need a booster shot](#) (gov.bc.ca)
- [Province-wide booster dose is next step in COVID-19 immunization plan](#) (gov.bc.ca)
- [Third dose vs. booster dose](#) (BCCDC)

For Northern Health clinic locations and times: [COVID-19 immunization clinics](#)

Mandatory vaccinations for all health care workers in effect

On September 13, 2021, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) announced that all employees, medical staff and other service providers who work in identified care locations in the health sector will be required to be fully (two doses) vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 26, 2021. This order is now in effect.

COVID-19 orders and policy – upcoming and in effect

Acute- and long-term care visitor policies

All visitors to Northern Health's acute-care and long-term-care settings must show they are fully vaccinated. For more information about provincial and regional public health orders and guidance: [Provincial and regional restrictions](#)

Gatherings and events

Northern Health's public health order restricting gatherings and events for most of the region (some areas of the Northwest are not included) were updated October 21, 2021. The order is in addition to the provincial stage three requirements, and the orders already in place for Northern BC. For more information:

- [New COVID-19 order for the Northern Health Authority](#)
- [NH Orders and FAQ resources](#)
- [NH Public Health COVID-19 Order Enforcement Actions](#)

For complaints or concern related to orders, please call [250-565-7322](tel:250-565-7322) or email php@northernhealth.ca.

Visit the Northern Health website for a [list of all Northern Health COVID-19 immunization clinics and other resources](#).

To book a vaccine appointment, register online at: www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca/, call 1-833-838-2323, or visit a Service BC office [listed here](#).

Northern BC community immunization coverage

Immunization coverage for every community in Northern Health is available for you on the [Northern BC community immunization coverage page](#). This link includes both first and second dose counts and percentages per community and is updated every week.

Community Toolkit

To empower local partners to share helpful information, we have created a [COVID-19 Community Toolkit](#) - a digital resource for community partners, which includes vaccine clinic information (including [clinic schedules](#)), a community guide, trusted information and links, and more!

BC vaccination coverage rates and COVID-19 activity

BCCDC COVID-19 dashboard

Visit the BCCDC [COVID-19 surveillance dashboard](#) for information by local health area (LHA) and community health service area (CHSA).

COVID-19 Numbers

As of October 28, **15,211** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **821**
- New cases: **133**
- Currently in hospital: **81**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **24**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **210**

For the latest provincial numbers, see the Province of BC [COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested.

As well, for a visual comparison of COVID-19 cases in BC by HSDA to other Canadian and global jurisdictions, see the [COVID-19 Epidemiology app](#). It's updated on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

- [BC COVID-19 pandemic update](#) – October 28, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – October 27, 2021

Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [Northern Health online booking form - COVID-19 test](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [HealthLink BC COVID-19 page](#)
- [WHO FAQ](#)
- [Health Canada FAQ](#)
- [COVID-19 content in other languages](#)
- WorkSafe BC - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- Northern Health Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic: **1-844-645-7811**
- Northern Health Environmental Health Officer Line: **1-250-565-7322**
- Non-medical info: call 1-888-COVID19 / 1-888-268-4319 7 days, 7:30 am - 8 pm

For current information on restrictions on travel, gatherings and other issues, see the [Provincial Health Officer's COVID-19 webpage](#).

Overdose prevention and response

Overdose response: Naloxone saves lives

Toxic drugs continue to circulate throughout our region causing overdose events and deaths. Given the contamination of the illicit drug supply overdoses can look different and may take more naloxone to respond. It is vital that family, friends and loved ones of people who use drugs are familiar with the signs and symptoms of overdose, have naloxone and know how to respond.

If you are a community based service provider and have not been trained yet on overdose response connect with your local THN provider by using the [site finder](#) for overdose response training and naloxone. Naloxone training can also be done online [here](#).

Further Resources:

- [BCCDC Take Home Naloxone Program](#)
- [Do I keep giving naloxone?](#)

Organizational news

All health care workers fully vaccinated

In order to best protect patients and residents, all employees, medical staff, and other service providers who work in health care locations and in the health sector are now fully vaccinated.

Haisla Nation's generous gift to Northern Health will leave a lasting legacy

During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Haisla Nation stepped forward to provide a \$300,000 donation to Northern Health to ensure staff and physicians have the tools and equipment available to support them in the work they do.

The donation enabled Northern Health to move forward on urgent equipment needs in Kitimat and Terrace, as well as provided the full investment needed for a new ultrasound machine at Kitimat General Hospital.

To read the full article, please visit the [Northern Health Stories website](#).

Flu season is quickly approaching

Getting the influenza vaccination is more important than ever this year, especially with a health authority already experiencing a COVID-19 surge.

With more people returning to the workplace, children back in school and changes to public health mandates, it is expected to see an increase of influenza cases this year compared to last year.

Peak influenza season is from December to February, and it takes a minimum of two weeks for antibodies against the flu to develop fully following vaccination. Northern Health will start offering influenza vaccine beginning the week of October 18, 2021. For more information about flu vaccination, please see:

- [Northern Health influenza information](#)
- [BCCDC influenza information](#)
- [CDC influenza information](#)

For information about the flu vaccine clinics being offered in the region, please see the [Northern Health flu information site](#), and the [ImmunizeBC Find an Influenza \(Flu\) Clinic site](#).