



Message from Dr. Verna Yiu & Dr. Laura McDougall

Rollout of Phase 2A and AstraZeneca

Dear staff, physicians and volunteers,

Today at 3:30 p.m., Alberta Health announced that bookings for Phase 2A of the COVID-19 vaccine program will begin the week of March 15. More than 437,000 Albertans will be offered the vaccine in this upcoming phase.

To reduce wait times and vaccinate people as quickly as possible, appointment bookings will be offered by age group. For example, on Day 1, anyone born in 1947 will be eligible to book an appointment. On Day 2, anyone born in 1948 will be able to book an appointment. In subsequent days and according to vaccine supply, Albertans born in 1949 would have access, and so on.

Booking days will open up by year of birth as vaccine is available until all Albertans between the ages of 65 and 74 have had the opportunity to be immunized.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis people aged 50 and older, will also receive the vaccine starting the week of March 15. Those living on reserve and on Métis settlements will have access to immunization within their communities, while those living off-reserve will be able to book online, through Health Link, or through a participating pharmacy.

We recommend all healthcare workers who become eligible in Phase 2A due to age, or other eligibility criteria proceed with getting their vaccine as soon as possible.

Covishield/AstraZeneca Rollout

Beginning March 10, the Covishield vaccine will be available to Albertans aged 50-64, who are currently in Phase 2D. Covishield is the brand name of a vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India and is considered the generic form of AstraZeneca by Health Canada.

Alberta will receive approximately 58,500 doses of Covishield and Alberta Health is recommending it for people who do not have severe chronic illness born in 1957-1971. Bookings for Covishield will start on March 10 with individuals born in 1957. Pending vaccine supply, Albertans born in 1958-1971 will be offered a chance to book in the following days, rolling one year at a time.

Eligible individuals who choose to not get the Covishield vaccine will have the option to wait to receive the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine when Phase 2D formally begins in early May. We anticipate further details on the immunization plan for those with chronic illness soon. We appreciate that 'severe chronic illness' is a broad term, and we are working to define that appropriately for clinicians to help Albertans make informed decisions.

More information on eligibility can be found on the [Alberta Health website](#).

The Covishield vaccine is widely used in the United Kingdom, France and other countries. Covishield has been shown to reduce infection by 60 – 70% and severe outcomes like hospitalization by 80%.

Receiving a vaccination, regardless of which option is chosen, will benefit our own health, as well as the health of our patients, families, communities, and all Albertans. Widespread vaccination will help all Albertans return to a more normal way of life, sooner.

Thank you for your continued support.

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