



Canadian
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The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

COVID-19 chapter of CPS: Therapeutic Choices updated and revised

CPhA's open access [COVID-19 chapter of CPS: Therapeutic Choices](#) has been fully reviewed and revised to reflect the latest evidence. The chapter provides primary-care practitioners with information and links to guidance for prevention of COVID-19, outpatient management of acute COVID-19 and long COVID syndrome, and management of special populations, such as pediatric patients.

CPhA appoints liaison to NACI

In early June, CPhA was invited to appoint a non-voting liaison representative to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Given the important and growing role pharmacists have played in administering COVID-19, influenza and other vaccinations across the country, the committee recognized the importance of including pharmacy's voice as decisions are made regarding NACI recommendations. This appointment is important for CPhA, as it represents an opportunity for pharmacists, as immunizers, to have their voices heard and to be recognized as significant contributors to improving public health. Phil Emberley, acting director of professional affairs, will represent CPhA on the 22-member committee.

Reminder: Pharmacies in ON, AB and MB can now register to distribute rapid test kits to workplaces

CPhA has worked with Health Canada and its partners in the pharmacy community to make

rapid test kits available in pharmacies for workplace testing by small and medium-sized enterprises. Increasing access to these tests is an important step in Canada's COVID-19 screening and recovery strategy, and pharmacists are ideally positioned to aid with distribution. To date, 700 pharmacies in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta have registered through the federal [pharmacy rapid-test distribution portal](#) to distribute tests to employers in their communities. CPhA has created a [resource page \(en français\)](#) with more information and additional training resources.

Provincial

Ontario in 'critical' period to use up Moderna shots: OPA

Ontario pharmacists say thousands of doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine are set to expire soon and warn the supply could go to waste if people don't show up to get a shot, [the Canadian Press reports](#). The CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA), Justin Bates, says some Moderna shots are set to expire in early August, and generally, supply that arrives in bulk must be used up within 30 days. Bates says a slowdown in Ontario's vaccine rollout and the public's preference for the Pfizer-BioNTech shot have made it difficult for pharmacists to use up the Moderna doses. "It's an awful situation for [pharmacists] to be in," Bates says. "They've done everything they can to make sure there's no wastage, but yet they're coming to that place where they may have to, or have already."

Some New Brunswick pharmacies opt-out of vaccine program as demand drops

For more than 4 months now, pharmacists in New Brunswick have been going "flat out," administering nearly 450,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines and counting, [according to CTV](#). "All of this, of course, is on top of the other work that they do," says Jake Reid, executive director of the New Brunswick Pharmacists' Association (NBPhA). New Brunswick has now vaccinated more than 81% of the eligible population with a first dose, and more than 66% have now received their second dose. However, NBPhA says demand for COVID-19 vaccines is dropping and about 30 community pharmacies in the province have now opted out of the vaccine program, with 179 now active. "That's certainly something we expected and not something anyone should be worried about," Reid says. "There is a de-escalation happening right now as pharmacy staff take some time for themselves."

NS pharmacists' scope of practice to include checking tick bites, prescribing antibiotics to prevent Lyme disease

As of August 1, pharmacists in Nova Scotia are authorized to check patients for ticks and tick bites and to prescribe an antibiotic to prevent Lyme disease, [the Halifax Examiner reports](#). The change to their scope of practice has been made because of the increasing prevalence of black-legged deer ticks, which has resulted in more people going to emergency departments worried about the potential for Lyme disease. With this addition to pharmacists' scope of practice, the Pharmacists Association of Nova Scotia (PANS) is asking the province to pay them a fee for seeing patients and prescribing the antibiotic. "Currently, pharmacists have public funding for the

assessment and for prescribing for other conditions such as uncomplicated urinary tract infections, shingles, and contraception,” says Lisa Woodill, the director of pharmacy practice with PANS. “We have asked that this service be added to that list. The fee that we would bill is yet to be determined.”

Working to full scope increases patient access, relieves pressure on health-care system: PANL

The Pharmacists’ Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) says pharmacists practicing to their full scope will not increase access for patients, but instead realize health-care savings, [Saltwire Network reports](#) in a series on health-care challenges in the province. PANL president Janice Audeau says one way to relieve pressure on the health-care system is allowing pharmacists to do more within the scope of practice they train for. For example, Newfoundland and Labrador and BC are the only 2 provinces that don’t allow pharmacists to diagnose and treat something as routine as a urinary tract infection (UTI). Audeau says PANL has [presented data](#) to the provincial Health Accord Task Force showing that involving pharmacists more integrally in the doctor-patient equation not only saves money, but also improves outcomes for conditions like heart disease and diabetes. “This has never been about pharmacists replacing physicians or nurse practitioners,” she says. “There are so many people who don’t have doctors, and these gaps where we could be filling in to improve efficiency might free up some money to be able to reinvest in some of these care teams, reinvest in recruitment and retention of physicians.”

National

Canada to receive 2.3 million COVID-19 vaccine doses this week

The federal government is expecting to receive more than 2.3 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine this week, as public health officials brace for a potential fourth wave of infections, [the Canadian Press reports](#). Ottawa has already received more than 66 million COVID-19 vaccine doses, enough to fully immunize all eligible Canadians. The new COVID-19 vaccine shipments come as Canada’s top doctor warns the country could be headed toward a fourth wave of COVID-19 cases if public health restrictions are lifted before vaccination rates pick up. “The trajectory will depend on ongoing increase in fully vaccinated coverage and the timing, pace and extent of reopening,” Dr. Theresa Tam said to reporters on July 30. “While some resurgence is expected as measures are eased, this updated model shows that if we maintain current levels of community-wide contacts, we would expect to see a modest increase in cases.”

CMA and CNA call for mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for health-care workers

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), representing physicians and nurses across Canada, are joining the call for mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for health-care workers, [according to a joint release](#). With mounting concerns over highly contagious COVID-19 variants and levelling-off vaccination rates across Canada, the statement says mandating vaccination among health-care workers is an additional measure to

protect patients, the health workforce, and the capacity of the health-care system. “As health providers, we have a fundamental duty of care towards our patients and the public. There is significant evidence that vaccines are safe and effective and as health professionals who are leading the vaccination campaigns, it is the right call and an appropriate step,” says Dr. Ann Collins, CMA president.

Canada’s Delta-driven fourth wave of COVID-19 will be ‘different’ amid vaccinations: experts

As public health officials warn of an incoming Delta variant–driven fourth wave of COVID-19, experts are saying its spread will likely be “very, very different” than Canada’s previous waves, [according to Global News](#). The warning came from Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam on July 30, who pointed at the upward trend in cases across Canada. Long-range epidemic forecasts from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) suggest “we are the start of a Delta-driven fourth wave,” Tam told reporters. Tam warned that if vaccine uptake doesn’t increase in the country’s younger populations, cases could eventually exceed some communities’ health-care system capacities. However, Dr. Gerald Evans, chair of the Division of Infectious Diseases at Queen’s University, says Canada’s fourth wave of COVID-19 will differ greatly from its previous ones despite the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports and warning from PHAC officials. He said there’s “no way” that such a wave would be as big as the previous ones simply because of Canada’s vaccinations rates, which remain among the highest in the world.

August is National Drug Drop Off Month: Drug Free Kids Canada

August is National Drug Drop-Off Month in Canada, an initiative led by Drug Free Kids Canada (DFK) that highlights the potential dangers of unsecured storage of prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications. The campaign encourages Canadians to clear out their medicine cabinets of all unused or expired medications and return them to their local pharmacy for safe disposal. DFK Canada has also [launched a new public awareness campaign](#) entitled “Families shouldn’t share everything” to remind parents that prescription and OTC medications should be taken only by the person they are prescribed to, and to engage in conversations with their kids about medication safety.

International

Australia: Queensland community pharmacies to join state-wide COVID-19 vaccine efforts

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia welcomes [the announcement](#) that over 200 metropolitan community pharmacies in Queensland will be able to deliver COVID-19 vaccinations beginning this week. “This news could not have come at a better time,” says Chris Own, the acting president of the Guild’s Queensland branch. “Rolling out the vaccine to all eligible community pharmacies will prove to be a real game changer. The only way to ensure we can stop these revolving lockdowns is to get as many people as possible vaccinated; community pharmacies are absolutely critical to success here,” Owen says. “The message we’re sending

Queenslanders when it comes to vaccines is clear. If you're over 18, have a discussion with your community pharmacist about getting the vaccine."

UK: COVID-19 vaccination could cause 'red' results in clozapine monitoring, pharmacists warn

A "normal" immune response to COVID-19 vaccination could interfere with routine clozapine monitoring, mental health pharmacists have warned, [according to the *Pharmaceutical Journal*](#). The warning comes after reports that a small number of people have had their clozapine treatment discontinued because of a reduction in white blood cells following infection with COVID-19. Currently, [national guidance](#) mandates that patients with a "red" or "amber" result—indicating that a patient's white blood cell or neutrophil count is lower than normal—should have extra monitoring or have their clozapine treatment stopped altogether. However, [studies](#) indicate that reductions in white blood cell count are likely to be a result of the COVID-19 infection and not clozapine, and experts say white blood cell counts should recover quickly without needing to stop the medication.

In-Depth

Unvaccinated Canada: Who's left behind, and why aren't they getting their COVID-19 shots?

Canada's high overall COVID-19 vaccination rates are concealing pockets where less than half the population has received a first dose, mostly in small towns and rural, remote parts of the country, [according to an analysis of provincial vaccination data in the *Globe and Mail*](#). The low rates in places such as High Level, Alberta, and the Rural Municipality of Stanley in southern Manitoba—both places where just 16% of the total population have gotten first shots—are leaving residents vulnerable to the fast-spreading Delta variant as provincial governments lift restrictions. The holdouts are also making it difficult for the country to fully vaccinate 80% of people 12 and over—a threshold Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Theresa Tam, [said on July 30](#) would be necessary to avoid overwhelming hospitals in the case of a Delta-fuelled fourth wave.

Worth repeating

"Don't be duped by the 'news' that infections and hospitalizations are up among the vaccinated. Of course they are. A lot of people are getting vaccinated. But, relatively, way fewer vaccinated people are ending up sick or in hospital and, here, relativity matters. The pandemic has become a pandemic of the unvaccinated." – [the *Globe and Mail* health columnist André Picard](#) puts the risks of breakthrough COVID-19 infections in perspective for those who have been vaccinated.

This weekly COVID-19 update is compiled by the Canadian Pharmacists Association. Please note that this publication is meant to inform and is not a comprehensive list of information available. Be sure to check with your provincial regulatory authority or advocacy association for province-specific information. While we aim to ensure all information contained in this

update is accurate, the situation is evolving rapidly and CPhA does not take responsibility for the content provided by other organizations and sources.

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