



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association
Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Latest pharmacy developments in response to COVID-19

May 26, 2021

CPhA

Vaccinating Canada: Justin Trudeau & Patty Hajdu get vaccinated at the pharmacy (video)

On April 23, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Health Minister Patty Hajdu rolled up their sleeves at their local pharmacies to be vaccinated against COVID-19. CPhA [caught up with the pharmacists](#) who administered those shots for a conversation about their experiences and why it is so important for all Canadians to get vaccinated.

Webinar reminder: The community pharmacy as a health hub

Our next practice development webinar, The community pharmacy as a health hub, will take place this **Thursday, May 27 from 1-2:30pm ET**. In this session, our featured panellists will discuss how community pharmacies are uniquely positioned to serve as health hubs and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected this model of care. They will share their innovative practices that combine education, advice and health-system navigation into patient care. [Registration](#) is now open.

New practice tool available: Administration of COVID-19 vaccine in special populations

CPhA has developed a new resource for pharmacists who have specific questions regarding the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines in patient populations who were excluded from initial clinical trials. The resource is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

Updated chart: Pharmacy involvement in COVID-19 vaccination

As COVID-19 vaccination rollouts continue, CPhA is making weekly updates to our Pharmacy Involvement in COVID Vaccination map, staying on top of the role pharmacists are playing in the vaccination effort. The graphic is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

CPhA's COVID-19 web pages are being updated regularly at www.pharmacists.ca/covid19 and www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr.

Provincial

The dos and don'ts of getting a COVID-19 shot at a SK pharmacy

Pharmacies in Saskatchewan have administered between 40,000 and 50,000 doses in the province since joining the vaccination drive in the last few weeks and are expected to play a greater role during the second-dose phase, says Dawn Martin, CEO of the Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan (PAS). According to the province, Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine shipments are being divvied up essentially 50-50 between Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) clinics and pharmacies. While pharmacists are used to giving out shots during flu season, the COVID-19 pandemic presents a new wrinkle in requiring the thawed-out Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to be used quickly in order to avoid any wastage, she said. "That's really intense this time around because the supply to date has been a bit limited, but is going to get better and better as we go into the next few weeks." In an interview with CBC, Martin offered [5 guidelines for people to follow](#) in order to help pharmacists in their future vaccination efforts.

ON pharmacies waiting on AstraZeneca vaccine shipments

On May 24, Ontario residents who received their first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine between March 10 and March 19 became eligible to book an appointment for their second shot. Last week a spokesperson for the Ontario Ministry of Health [told Global News](#) that around 100,000 people received their first dose of AstraZeneca during that time frame. There are approximately 55,000 doses in the province set to expire at the end of May. Ontario Pharmacists Association CEO Justin Bates said approximately 31,000 doses are located in community pharmacies. "We started the planning process about 7 days ago, working with the distributor to determine where all of the remaining 31,000 doses are located," Bates told Global News. The pharmacy announcement applies to Toronto, Kingston and Windsor, which were part of the initial rollout. A number of primary care settings also received doses. "This is an early second dose, and there is a replenishment strategy," Bates said.

NB pharmacist dispels myth about different effectiveness of Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines

A New Brunswick pharmacy owner is speaking out — and looking to set the record straight — over the effectiveness of the Moderna vaccine after recently noticing a troubling trend. "I'm hearing the conversations our assistants and techs are having with people on the phone, saying which vaccine is it? Oh, it's Moderna?" says pharmacist Alistair Bursey. "There seems to be almost a preference going on for Pfizer," [he tells CTV News](#). Bursey says they're hearing misinformation from some people who believe that the Moderna vaccine isn't as good as Pfizer-

BioNTech when it comes to its level of protection against COVID-19. Both vaccines share the same technology, mRNA, which, according to the government of Canada, teaches our cells how to make a protein that will trigger an immune response, without having to use the live COVID-19 virus. Both have been found to be nearly identical when it comes to level of protection. “In this situation Moderna and Pfizer are between 94 and 95% effective,” says Bursey.

Provinces move to shorten interval between vaccine doses

Some provinces have begun moving up second doses of COVID-19 vaccines in anticipation of increased shipments, a move that experts say will better protect more vulnerable populations, [reports the Globe and Mail](#). BC Provincial Health Officer Bonnie Henry said on May 25 that the province is set to reduce the interval between the first and second doses, with details to be announced on May 27. Nova Scotia also announced that it would speed up the delivery of second doses by 2 to 4 weeks. Saskatchewan announced a full second-dose schedule that began last week with people 85 and up and continues with younger age groups through July, but cautioned that its timeline was contingent on supply. Quebec has completed second doses for long-term care residents and plans on completing them in retirement homes by the end of the month. Ontario and Manitoba have so far opened up second doses only to people with the highest-risk health conditions, such as some cancer patients and organ transplant recipients, as well as Indigenous people and, in Ontario, some health-care workers. Ontarians who received an AstraZeneca shot between March 10 and 19 are eligible for a second shot this week.

National

Confused over brands, people are turning down Moderna vaccine, UW pharmacy prof says

People who appear confused over the companies making vaccines have been turning down the Moderna vaccine, says a University of Waterloo pharmacy professor. Kelly Grindrod, who works as a pharmacist and is part of a vaccination clinic in Kitchener, [told CBC](#) that brand recognition is playing a role in vaccination. Many people recognize the company Pfizer, so they are opting for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. “For the health-care providers we all went, ‘What? Pfizer and Moderna are the same. Like, why would people do that?’” Grindrod says people should know the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are like “Coke and Pepsi where you can’t quite tell the difference between the flavours.” Both vaccines are mRNA, which teach the body how to make a protein that will trigger an immune response to help ward off the virus. “They are like twins, they are very much the same — same effectiveness, same efficacy, same benefits,” she said.

Canada poised to ‘ramp up’ second COVID-19 doses starting in June

With more than half of Canadians now at least partially vaccinated against COVID-19 and bookings opening for all who are eligible, the federal government says the country will be well-placed to start “moving forward on second doses” in June, [according to CTV](#). While Canada is now sitting third among G20 countries when it comes to doses administered per capita, the country still trails behind when it comes to the number of eligible citizens who are fully

vaccinated. This is a result of governments opting to take the advice of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) to delay second shots by up to 16 weeks, to more widely spread what in early 2021 was a limited supply of vaccines. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he remains “absolutely confident” that every person who is eligible and willing to be vaccinated will be, by the end of September. “We will have more than enough doses in Canada by the end of June to give a first dose to every Canadian who wants one, and second doses will continue to ramp up through June and into the summer,” Trudeau said.

When it comes to vaccine interchangeability, NACI recommends using the same type

NACI has provided new recommendations on vaccine interchangeability, saying that COVID-19 vaccine types should remain consistent, [reports CTV](#). “NACI recommends that the vaccine series be completed with the same COVID-19 vaccine product when possible. If the vaccine product used for a previously received dose is not known, or not available, attempts should be made to complete the vaccine series with a similar type of COVID-19 vaccine,” [according to a statement](#) released May 21. For example, the committee says a vaccination series started with a mRNA vaccine should be completed with another mRNA vaccine and the series should not be restarted. By contrast, NACI said if a second dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is unavailable it could be supplemented with the single-dose Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine.

International

UK: RPS issues position statement on COVID-19 vaccinations for pharmacists

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) has [released a position statement](#) on COVID-19 vaccinations for pharmacists in which it actively and strongly encourages all pharmacists to take advantage of the COVID-19 vaccination program and to get vaccinated unless there is a medical reason why they are unable to do so. “All members of the pharmacy team should have any vaccine deemed necessary to help protect themselves, their patients and the wider community. We consider this to be best practice and within the standards for pharmacy professionals where pharmacists should make the care of the person their first concern and act in their best interests,” the statement reads. The statement also says that the RPS does not agree with making COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory, as informed and educated choices about health interventions would be more beneficial long-term than enforcing them.

Survey shows vast majority of US pharmacists fully vaccinated against COVID-19

A nationwide [survey of US pharmacists](#) has found that 88% of respondents are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and that more than 9 in 10 (92%) said they plan to or have already been vaccinated. An overwhelming percentage of pharmacists (98%) also said they were comfortable addressing vaccine confidence and vaccine hesitancy concerns with their patients and other individuals. The survey continues to demonstrate the growing confidence of pharmacists in the effectiveness and safety of the vaccines, and in their ability to talk to their patients about them, according to the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). The study is the latest in a series of

surveys on vaccine confidence conducted by APhA since September 2020. The 366 pharmacists surveyed from May 1-8, 2021, covered pharmacists from every region in the nation. They work in a broad range of practice settings, with nearly half practicing in community-based settings.

Moderna says COVID-19 vaccine shows 100% efficacy in teens aged 12-17

Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine was shown to be effective in adolescents aged 12-17 and showed no new or major safety problems in a clinical trial, [Reuters reports](#). The development potentially sets the stage for a second vaccine for school-aged children to be authorized this summer. Moderna, whose vaccine is authorized for adults 18 and older, said it will submit the findings of its adolescent study to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other regulators for emergency use authorization in early June. US regulators took about a month to review a similar study from Pfizer-BioNTech, which was authorized for ages 12-15 on May 10. If Moderna gets the same treatment, its authorization would come in early July. Canada approved Pfizer's shot for those aged 12 to 15 before the US.

Pharmacy on the front line

Pharmacy owner in Oshawa area raising money for COVID-19 crisis in India

A pharmacy is extending a helping hand across the globe, raising money to help those impacted by India's latest COVID-19 wave, [reports Global](#). The overwhelming impact of the virus in India is being felt around the world, something that Hank Parsaniya, owner of Trail Capital IDA pharmacy in Uxbridge, ON, couldn't stand by and watch. The pharmacy owner is from the small village of Zinzari, with a population of less than 5,000, and reports that after living there for 25 years, he personally knows several people who have lost their lives to the virus. After sitting back and realizing the devastation, he started a fundraiser through [his pharmacy's Facebook page](#). The campaign has raised more than \$7,000 for the cause—money that will go directly to someone in need. "Everything that you donate, it goes 100% to India. There is nothing lost in the transaction," he says. Parsaniya has already used part of the money to help with things like tuition for one family, after a young woman attending medical school had both her parents pass away. The cash also went to purchasing an oxygen concentrator for a local health centre.

In-depth

How can we more effectively address COVID myths?

The Ontario Medical Association recently released startling findings about online COVID hoax theorists, revealing that the vast majority of myth super-spreaders are among those most in need of the vaccine: men and women between the ages of 55 and 64. Myth spreaders of any age are dangerous, particularly now as variants of concern have taken Ontario into its most deadly pandemic phase yet. Facts are not enough to stop myths; it takes influence and accountability for the safety of others. In a [column in the Ottawa Citizen](#), Dr. Donald Redelmeier, a staff physician in general internal medicine at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and a professor of

medicine at the University of Toronto, offers 5 techniques that can help to influence what people believe and set the record straight.

Worth repeating

“It is a milestone. It’s like: ‘Hey, we as a society have passed an important point in this marathon and we can almost see the finish line.’ And even though we’re all tired, we’re going to sprint to the end together.” — Raywat Deonandan, epidemiologist and recent CPhA webinar panellist, on [why the psychological impact](#) of reaching the 50% milestone for first dose vaccines can’t be ignored.

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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