

COVID-19 Update

For more information:
Canada.ca/coronavirus

Information for Indigenous communities:
Canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous



INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA – Ontario Region – October 28, 2021

As we watch the geese fly south and the vibrant landscapes around us change colour, we know that winter will soon be upon us. Cooler temperatures and inclement weather will mean that much of our socializing will transition from outdoor to indoor activities. While making these plans, we must remember to follow public health measures that are in place to minimize the spread of illnesses including COVID-19 and seasonal influenza. Also keep in mind the vaccine mandate for travel that comes into effect this week along with the other travel obligations related to COVID-19. This update includes relevant information for travel, as well as resources for the upcoming cold and flu season. Understanding how the mandates impact your communities is integral for minimal disruption when traveling.

Garry Best, Regional Executive and Anne Scotton, Regional Director General

National Vaccine Mandate: Accommodations for Remote Communities

Effective October 30, all commercial air passengers over the age of 12 departing from Canadian airports must provide proof of vaccination to travel by air. There will be a transition period from Oct. 30-Nov. 29 where travelers may alternatively show a valid COVID-19 molecular test taken within 72 hours of travel.

The mandate includes specific accommodations for travelers from remote communities to ensure they can travel to obtain essential services in support of their medical needs, health, or social well-being, and return to their homes.

Until local testing capacity is assured, travelers departing from airports serving remote communities will not be required to provide proof of vaccination or a valid COVID-19 molecular test. The Government of Canada will deploy high quality rapid COVID-19 molecular tests to build local testing capacity. This accommodation will not apply to onward flights (i.e. from a gateway airport to a 3rd destination).

At gateway airports, airline operators will provide self-administered rapid COVID-19 molecular test kits to all travelers that are not vaccinated or do not have a valid molecular test result prior to checking in for any flight to remote communities or to southern destinations. A negative test result will allow unvaccinated travelers to continue their travel without need for another test for 72 hours. Protocols to support travelers who test positive are in development.

These accommodations are an interim measure to ensure that travel to/from remote communities is not disrupted on October 30, and may be further refined as necessary.

Ontario airports that are considered gateways are Hamilton; Kingston; London, North Bay; Ottawa; Sault St. Marie; Sudbury; Thunder Bay; Timmins; and Toronto (Pearson).

Health Canada receives submission from Pfizer-BioNTech to authorize the use of Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine in children 5 to 11 years of age

On October 18, 2021, Health Canada received a submission from Pfizer-BioNTech seeking an authorization for the use of its Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine in children 5 to 11 years of age. As with all COVID-19 vaccines, the department will prioritize the review of this submission, while maintaining its high scientific standards for safety, efficacy and quality.

Health Canada will only authorize the use of Comirnaty for children 5 to 11 years of age if the independent and thorough scientific review of all the data included in the submission showed that the benefits of the vaccine outweighed the potential risks in this age group. The assessment will include a detailed review of clinical trial results, as well as other evolving data and information about the health impacts of COVID-19 and variants of concern on children in Canada.

The Government of Canada and Pfizer have agreed to an accelerated delivery schedule of this vaccine, pending regulatory authorization. The Government of Canada will continue to closely monitor the evolution of COVID-19 vaccines and work with vaccine suppliers to access new formulations as quickly as possible, so Canada can finish the fight against COVID-19.

COVID-19 Vaccines for Ontario

- 22,435,076 Total doses administered
- 84% of eligible population (12+) have both doses; 4% have one dose.

* All data reflects total from 6 p.m. the previous day

Going Back to School Safely during COVID-19

Have you heard of our new [Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program](#) (CSICP)? Cultural activities for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples are essential. This program provides funding for the construction and renovation of long houses, cultural centres, heritage parks, powwow grounds, cultural ceremonies, teachings, land-based education activities and more! Applications are open until December 1.

Accessing additional public health support for First Nations and Inuit communities during COVID-19

First Nations communities can access [additional public health support to respond to COVID-19](#) through to March 31, 2022, when this authority expires. Eligible recipients include First Nations communities and organizations that deliver community-based services in response to COVID-19 public health needs in cases of outbreaks, this funding can be accessed for surge capacity and additional support.

Examples of COVID-19 public health expenses that may be supported include costs related to:

- Surge health care professionals for vaccine administration
- CPR-trained staff to oversee observation area for adverse events following immunization
- Elder or traditional healer support to promote vaccine confidence
- Mental wellness workers
- Childcare providers for those attending clinics
- Staffing and surge capacity to support Point of Care Testing

Please forward all requests to the Ontario Region COVID-19 inbox: covid-19fnihbontario@sac-isc.gc.ca

Flu and other routine vaccination resources

While receiving both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine is critical, there are also important routine vaccines to remember.

The [Ontario immunization schedule](#) for publicly-funded vaccines helps keep immunizations for infants and children on track. Diseases that First Nations and Inuit communities are at risk for are listed [here](#), including information on programs that help prevent and manage illness.

With cold and flu season around the corner, the seasonal flu vaccine will be available in November. Indigenous people with chronic health conditions or living in overcrowded homes are at a higher risk of hospitalization and serious health complications from the flu.

Resources to encourage community members to receive their flu shot can be found [here](#). It is safe to receive the flu and COVID-19 vaccine simultaneously if the option is available.

REMINDER - Border measures remain in place for travelers entering or returning to Canada

On October 12, 2021, the United States announced that in November, they will begin allowing fully vaccinated travelers from Canada to enter the United States at land and ferry points of entry for discretionary (non-essential reasons) such as tourism.

The Canada Border Services Agency reminds travelers that border measures remain in place for those entering or returning to Canada and that they should get informed and understand their obligations for traveling.

Travelers should check if they are [eligible to enter Canada](#) and meet all [entry requirements](#) before traveling.

ArriveCAN application has launched

The [ArriveCAN app](#) is now live, and all travelers —with limited exceptions— whether entering Canada by air, land, rail or marine vessel, must use ArriveCAN. It is easy and free to use, and helps keep each other safe.

Canadian citizens, permanent residents or persons registered under the *Indian Act* will not be denied boarding or entry, but won't be eligible for the [fully vaccinated traveler exemption](#) and may face additional delays at the border for public health questioning.

If your travel is related to any of the following travel purposes, you can save time by creating an exempt essential travel profile and enter your information once. Reuse your receipt for each entry into Canada.

- Cross-border work (e.g., you cross the border to work)
- Essential services (e.g., you live in an integrated trans-border community)
- Medical and health care support (e.g., health care practitioner, you received or will receive medical care, or you transport medical equipment or supplies)

COVID-19 Cases

*As of October 27, 2021, @ 12p.m.

- **2,910** confirmed in-community since the beginning of the pandemic
- **37** active cases on reserve
- **33** deaths since beginning of pandemic
- **2,848** resolved (97.9%)



Please feel free to contact the FNIHB Ontario COVID-19 generic inbox: covid-19fnihbontario@sac-isc.gc.ca if you or your community members have any information needs.