

# COVID-19 Update

For more information:  
[Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus)

Information for Indigenous communities:  
[Canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous)



## INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA – Ontario Region – April 8, 2021

Spring is upon us. As the days get longer, the trees and grasses awaken from their winter rest and animals are more active, we are reminded of this time of rebirth and new growth. We appreciate the resilience shown by Mother Earth, and reflect upon the resilience that we demonstrate as we live through the COVID-19 pandemic.

We encourage you to remind your community members to be gentle with themselves and with others, and tuned into the needs of their bodies and minds. Warm days provide an opportunity to enjoy the restorative effects of sunshine and reconnect with nature. Taking a break from screens and being outdoors each day empowers us to tune in with ourselves and can improve our moods and wellbeing. Allow yourself time to enjoy a relaxed state of “being,” which frees you from a constant state of “doing.” The outdoors also provides a boost of Vitamin D, which is important for your overall health. An [infographic](#) can be found on the OneHealth Portal.

Brighter days are ahead for us all as the vaccine rollout continues in Ontario and across Canada. By remaining diligent with following Public Health Measures as we move towards widespread immunity through vaccination, we can all look forward to gathering and resuming the activities that mean so much to us all.

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

### Ontario moving to Phase 2 of vaccine rollout

This week, the Ontario government announced a shift into Phase Two of its COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan, with a focus on reaching individuals in “hot spot” communities where COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted certain neighbourhoods. This phase will prioritize individuals with the highest-risk health conditions in April 2021.

While this phase enables more people to receive their vaccinations, First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations who have not yet received their shots remain a top priority. These populations can reach out to their local Public Health Unit to book an appointment.

The Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be offered in First Nations communities, and the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccines continue to be offered in urban centres. Only COVID-19 vaccines that Health Canada determines to be safe and effective will be approved for use.

Learn more about [Ontario’s COVID-19 vaccination program](#) on their website.

### Vaccines and treatments for COVID-19: Safety after authorization

After a vaccine has been authorized for use in Canada, Health Canada continues to monitor its safety and effectiveness; this is called the post-market surveillance. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Health Canada is increasing their monitoring and assessment activities of emerging safety issues, and sharing the information with other partners in Canada and worldwide. Information on safety monitoring can be found [here](#).

Health Canada is also closely monitoring the emerging variants of the COVID-19 virus to assess the impact of the new variants on the effectiveness of the approved vaccines and treatments. If issues are identified, Health Canada will work quickly with the manufacturers and public health laboratories to mitigate the risks and inform Canadians.

### COVID-19 Vaccines for Ontario

- **104,382** Daily doses administered
- **2,726,221** Total doses administered
- **324,783** People fully vaccinated
- \* All data reflects total from 6 p.m. the previous day

The Vaccine Community Innovation Challenge invites proposals for innovative campaigns to promote vaccine confidence until April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Twenty finalists will receive \$25,000 each to create and implement their campaign. One winner will receive a grand prize of \$100,000. Stage 1 finalists will be announced on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

### New resources available on the OneHealth Portal

New information and resources are made available each week on the [OneHealth Portal](#). A few updates to highlight:

- The most recent [COVID-19 Toolkit \(version 3\)](#), which includes new social media messaging and resources comprised of videos, webpages and posters in multiple Indigenous languages.
- [Public Health Alert](#) related to Spring holiday gatherings
- [The importance of Vitamin D](#)
- [Reminder for NIHB travellers](#)
- Variants of Concern fact-sheet ([Eng/Fr](#))
- [PSA scripts](#) to encourage vaccine confidence

### Information unrelated to COVID-19

#### Broadband and Cellular Expansion Projects

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) has launched a program to support broadband and cellular expansion projects to address broadband gaps in northern Ontario by increasing connectivity for unserved or underserved areas. The program targets broadband projects in northern Ontario, including in Indigenous communities, that have applied to and have been declined funding and/or do not meet the eligibility requirements under other Ontario infrastructure programs, such as *Improving Connectivity in Ontario* (ICON). For more information and to apply, please visit [NOHFC's website](#).

#### Canada Census 2021

Canada's next census will be held in May 2021. Early in May, census packages will be delivered to dwellings across Canada, providing residents with the information they need to complete their census questionnaire online or by phone. For the first time, everyone living in an Indigenous community and who has reliable Internet access will have the ability to complete the census questionnaire online. More information can be found [here](#).

Statistics Canada employs people in their home communities, including First Nations communities, Metis settlements and Inuit Nunangat. [Resources are available](#) to promote census jobs and awareness in your community.

### Ontario declares a stay-at-home order

A province-wide declaration of emergency and a stay-at-home order are in effect as of April 8 at 12:01 a.m. to curb the alarming rate of COVID-19 transmission in the province. More information on these measures can be found on the [Government of Ontario's COVID-19 website](#).

### COVID-19 Variants of Concern (VOC)

The virus that causes COVID-19, like all viruses, is constantly changing. Globally, there are multiple COVID-19 variants of concern. The Government of Canada continues to work with the provinces, territories and Indigenous partners to track and respond to these variants of concern. ISC continues to review new research and information about the COVID-19 variants as they become available and provide updates. More information about VOC can be found in these [English](#) and [French](#) fact-sheets.

### Operation Remote Immunity

After ten weeks, Operation Remote Immunity, which has been delivering first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to remote northern Ontario First Nations communities, will terminate operations and transfer the delivery of vaccines to First Nations members to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) on April 9.

ISC, working with its partners such as the Sioux Lookout First Nation Health Authority and the Weeneebayko Area Health Authority, will be ready to continue delivering vaccines to residents in communities in northern Ontario. Read more about what else ISC is doing [here](#).

### COVID-19 Cases

\*As of April 7, 2020, @ 4:30 p.m.

- **1,388** confirmed in-community
- **67** active cases on reserve
- **18** deaths
- **1303** resolved (94%)



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