

COVID-19 Update

For more information:
Canada.ca/coronavirus

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



INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA – Ontario Region Holiday Update

In keeping with our commitment to provide you with new and emerging information in a timely manner, we are issuing this special holiday edition of the COVID-19 Update. The holiday season will definitely be different this year and while the COVID-19 vaccine is being rolled out in Canada, it will be important to continue to remind your community members to remain vigilant. Cases continue to rise in Ontario and for this reason we issued a Public Health Alert which is attached to the December 17, 2020 meeting invitation. You can print and post this Alert around your community. We know that as the pandemic continues through the winter, it will become more difficult to maintain public health guidelines, especially during the holiday season. However, we need to take a moment to acknowledge how effectively communities have responded to this pandemic and that there is light at the end of the tunnel. In these difficult times, we'd like to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes to you and to your community members for a safe, healthy and happy holiday season.

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

Standards for COVID-19 Vaccines

Vaccines are one of the safest and most effective ways to stop the spread and reduce the adverse impacts of infectious diseases. All Canadians are encouraged to receive the vaccine to protect themselves, their families and communities.

Canada is recognized around the world for its high standards for [drug and vaccine review, approvals](#) and [monitoring](#) systems; these will not be compromised.

We are committed to sharing information on the science and safety of vaccinations with you and your members to help inform your choices to receive the vaccine when it becomes available to Indigenous communities.

More information about the vaccine is available here: ([English/French](#)).

The Public Health Agency of Canada has produced printable resources on [What You Need to Know About The COVID-19 Vaccine For Canada](#). The printable page is available in several languages, including ten Indigenous languages.

COVID-19 Vaccine Availability and Distribution

Canada is working on all possible fronts to secure access to safe and effective treatments and vaccines as quickly as possible. All potential COVID-19 vaccines will require Health Canada regulatory approval prior to being used.

While Canada has received its first shipment of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccines, it is not appropriate for many First Nation communities, because of the need to store it at a temperature of -70C. For this reason, it is only being distributed from a limited number of urban locations across Canada.

Health Canada is in the process of approving other more easy-to-store vaccines. However, we currently don't have information regarding the supplies and distribution, as approvals are on-going. We do however know that at-risk groups, including some members of Indigenous communities, will be among the priority groups to receive these other vaccines.

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) is currently working with federal, provincial and other Indigenous partners on the distribution and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario's Indigenous communities.

Once we learn more about distribution and administration plans and ISC's role in these plans, we will advise you in a timely manner.



For the most up-to-date national information on COVID-19, visit [Indigenous Services Canada's website](#) or the Government of Canada's Twitter and Facebook pages at [@GCIndigenous](#) and [GCIndigenousHealth](#)