

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: April 7, 2022

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Please email questions about COVID-19 to: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

The BA.2 variant (a sub-variant of Omicron) continues to be the dominant strain in Alberta and [Wastewater surveillance](#) data shows signs of rising transmission of COVID-19 in Calgary and Edmonton. The BA.2 sub-variant is highly transmissible and hospitalizations continue to be very high. It is important to remember that the sub-variant can still result in severe outcomes, particularly for those that are not vaccinated or who are older or medically at risk. A new variant, a hybrid of BA.1 and BA.2, called the XE variant has been identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as potentially the most transmissible variant of COVID-19 to date. There are no confirmed cases of this variant in the province.

The province remains in [Step 2](#) of the three phase approach to easing public health restrictions in Alberta. Nearly all pandemic public health measures have been lifted in the province as of March 1; however masking is still required in high-risk settings. These settings include Alberta Health Services (AHS)-operated and contracted acute care facilities, all continuing care settings, and on municipal and intra-provincial public transit for Albertans aged 13 and older. Masking requirements continue to be recommended in all health centres located in First Nation communities. New recommendations for additional booster doses were released by NACI on April 5, 2022. Based on these recommendations, Alberta has expanded eligibility for fourth booster doses, beginning April 12, 2022, to all Albertans aged 70 and older and First Nations, Métis and Inuit people age 65 and older, and all seniors in congregate care regardless of age as long as 5 months have passed since their third dose.

Please note, as data on case numbers has become less reliable and as the majority of restrictions in Alberta have lifted, the MOH Bulletin will be discontinued and COVID-19 updates will be consolidated and shared in the Chiefs' Bulletin.

Number of Cases Reported* as of April 05, 2022:

**numbers are changing rapidly and may change after this bulletin is released*

Alberta: There were **990** COVID-19 cases in hospital in Alberta as of end of day April 04, 2022.

First Nations in Alberta: Aggregate data on COVID-19 First Nations cases in Alberta is available at: <http://www.afnigc.ca/main/index.php?id=home> and <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>.

First Nations	Total Cases	Deaths	Hospitalized Ever	Currently Hospitalized
Living on Reserve in Alberta	19,627	173	975	25
Living on and off reserve in Alberta	38,076	324	2,957	70

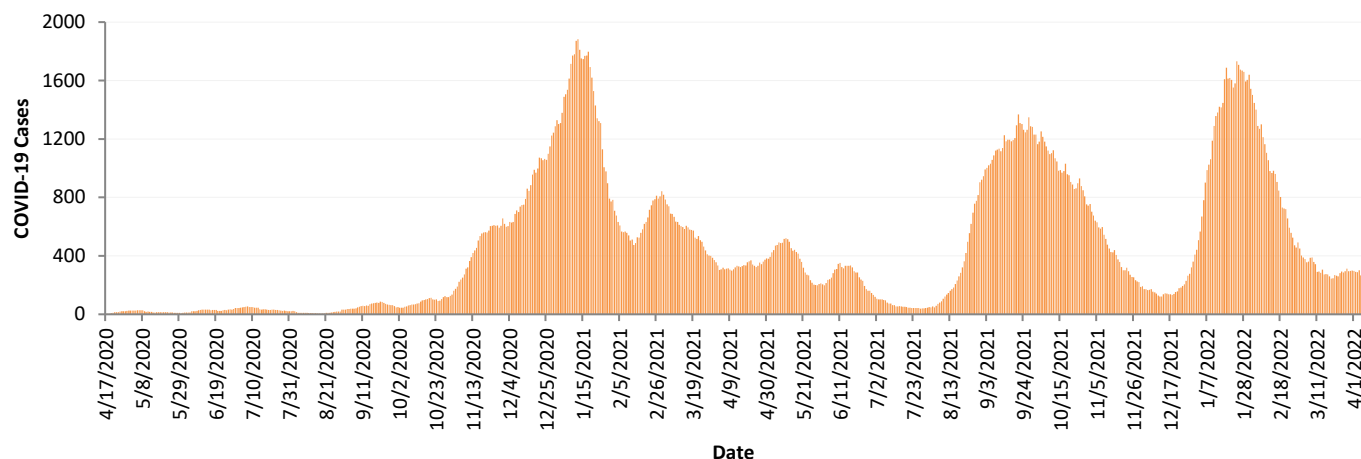


Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Canada

Active confirmed COVID-19 cases by date, April 05, 2022



COVID-19 in First Nations living on reserve in Alberta

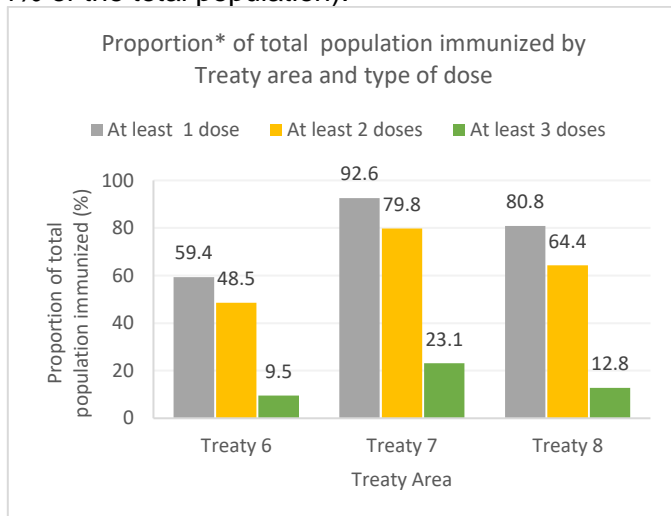
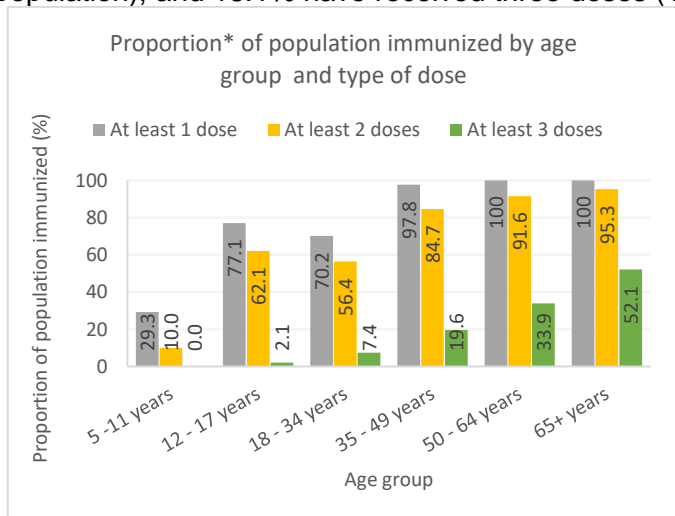
Treaty Area	Total Cases	Deaths	Hospitalized Ever	Currently Hospitalized
TOTAL	19,627	173	975	25
Treaty 6	8,887	68	396	10
Treaty 7	5,438	65	310	8
Treaty 8	5,302	40	269	7

COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 Vaccine in First Nations people living on reserve in Alberta as of April 05, 2022.

- **121,475** doses have been administered to First Nations living on-reserve in Alberta.
- **60,207** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least one dose
- **49,738** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least two doses
- **11,530** First Nations people living on reserve have received three doses

Approximately 89.1% of the population aged 12 years and older living on reserve have received at least one dose (75.2% of the total population), 76.1% have received at least two doses (62.2% of the total population), and 18.1% have received three doses (14.4% of the total population).



*Percentages are calculated using unadjusted ISC-IRS on-reserve and Crown land population as of December 31, 2020. If the proportion of population immunized in any age group exceeds 100% because of population data limitation, we keep the proportion at 100% by adjusting the population to be equal to the number of first doses administered in that age group

COVID-19 Vaccine

- **[New]** The National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI) released an initial statement on the use of second COVID-19 booster doses in Canada on April 5, 2022. NACI recommends that jurisdictions prepare for the rapid deployment of a second COVID-19 vaccine booster dose program over the coming weeks prioritizing the following populations, as close surveillance and assessment suggest concerning trends in the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Adults 80 years of age and over living in the community; and
 - Residents of long-term care or other congregate living settings for seniors.
 - While the greatest benefit is expected in adults 80 years of age and older, jurisdictions may also consider offering a second COVID-19 booster dose to adults 70-79 years of age living in the community.
- **[New]** Based on these recommendations, the Province of Alberta has announced that, beginning April 12, all Albertans age 70 and older, First Nations, Métis and Inuit people age 65 and older, and all seniors in congregate care regardless of age can receive a fourth dose of vaccine as long as 5 months have passed since their third dose. Further information is available [here](#).
- **Reminder:** All youth aged 12 – 17 in Alberta are eligible to book a booster dose. Booster doses are available for all First Nations aged 12 years old and older in Alberta regardless of where they live.
- Children 5 to 11 years of age with certain [immunocompromising conditions](#) are also eligible for an additional dose. A fact sheet on vaccinations for children aged 5 – 11 is available at [covid-19-get-facts-vaccinating-children-eng.pdf \(canada.ca\)](#)

COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)

- Emerging evidence on Omicron variants indicates that swabbing both an individual's mouth and nose is a more effective for detecting COVID-19 when using a rapid antigen test. See the new [guidance for at-home rapid test sample collection](#) for the recommended swabbing process and what to do depending on the results. Watch this [instructional video](#) on how to swab both an individual's mouth and nose at home.
- **Reminder:** COVID-19 rapid antigen testing kits for at-home use can help identify infections early and help stop the spread of COVID-19. These tests are intended for at-home personal use for screening in symptomatic and asymptomatic people. Only certain people need to confirm RAT results with PCR testing. To find out what to do if you get a positive, negative, or invalid rapid antigen test result, refer to [Rapid testing at home](#). First Nations communities requiring at-home test kits should email rapidtesting@gov.ab.ca.
- **Reminder:** Employers and service providers can apply to receive free rapid test kits for use in their organization's COVID-19 screening program. More information on the rapid testing program for employers and service providers can be found [here](#).

Steps Individuals Can Take

- Most people recover from COVID-19 without special treatment and can manage mild symptoms at home. Resources are available to help you manage mild symptoms at home and take care of someone who has COVID-19. AHS has developed a [COVID-19 Self-Care Guide](#) if you need further information on how to manage COVID-19 at home. In addition, the Alberta Medical Association has [Patient Resources for COVID-19](#) available on their website that can help determine when you may need to talk to your doctor. It is not always necessary to get in touch with your doctor, as most people with mild symptoms can manage at home with no problems.

Mental Health and Wellness

- **Reminder:** The COVID-19 pandemic has been stressful for many individuals, families, and communities who have all been affected in several ways. The [Hope for Wellness](#) help line offers immediate, toll-free telephone and online-chat based support and crisis intervention to all Indigenous people across Canada. Help is available in English and French, and upon request in Cree and Ojibway. Call the toll-free Help Line at **1-855-242-3310**, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week.

Virtual Care Clinic

- **Reminder:** The Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic (AIVCC) has updated their hours and they are now **open until 8:30pm on Wednesdays**. The AIVCC serves individuals self-identifying as First Nations, Inuit and Métis and their families. AIVCC provides same-day care to rural and urban Indigenous people residing in Alberta via secure video or phone service and can be reached at 1-888-342-4822 or www.aivcc.ca.

Additional Information

- **[New]** The next COVID-19 telehealth session will be held on April 21, 2022. More details on the session will be available in the coming weeks. You can register at <http://www.fntn.ca>.
- If you have general questions about COVID-19 or require current information, please refer to the following websites which are trusted information sources and are being regularly maintained and updated. **Should you have questions about COVID-19, please do not hesitate to email:** sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

OneHealth - <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19>

InfoPoint (First Nations Health Manager Association) – This site is designed for First Nation health managers to access credible sources of information related to COVID-19. To access this service, call the toll-free number at **1-855-446-2719**, or email InfoPoint@fnhma.ca

Alberta Health

- Coronavirus info for Albertans: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Alberta Health Services

- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>
- Indigenous Peoples & Communities (COVID-19): https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUpo6_wGmSxUc

Indigenous Services Canada COVID-19 (Updates available in several Indigenous languages)

- COVID-19 & Indigenous Communities: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>

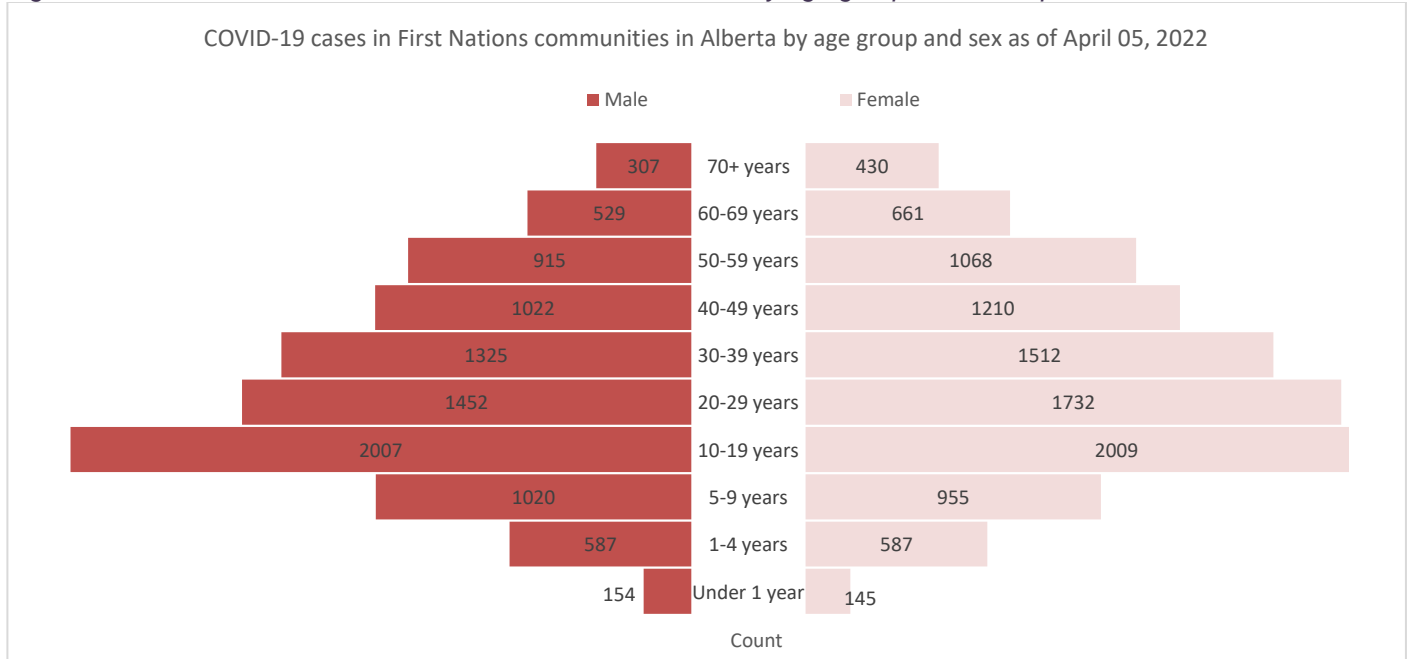
Mental health and coping resources are available for individuals who are struggling or need a little extra support.

- The Mental Health Help Line [1-877-303-2642](tel:1-877-303-2642) is available 24/7 to provide advice and referrals to community supports near you.
- Hope for Wellness Help Line [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Kids and teens can call the Kids Help Phone: [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868).
- Text COVID19HOPE to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to a free service supporting mental health and wellness in a time of stress and isolation.
- Family Violence Resources: <https://www.alberta.ca/family-violence-prevention-resources.aspx>
- **Text4Hope-Addiction Support** is designed to help Albertans dealing with psychological issues related to addiction. Text "Open2Change" to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe.

Anyone with specific questions or concerns about their health is encouraged to call Health Link at 811 for health advice.

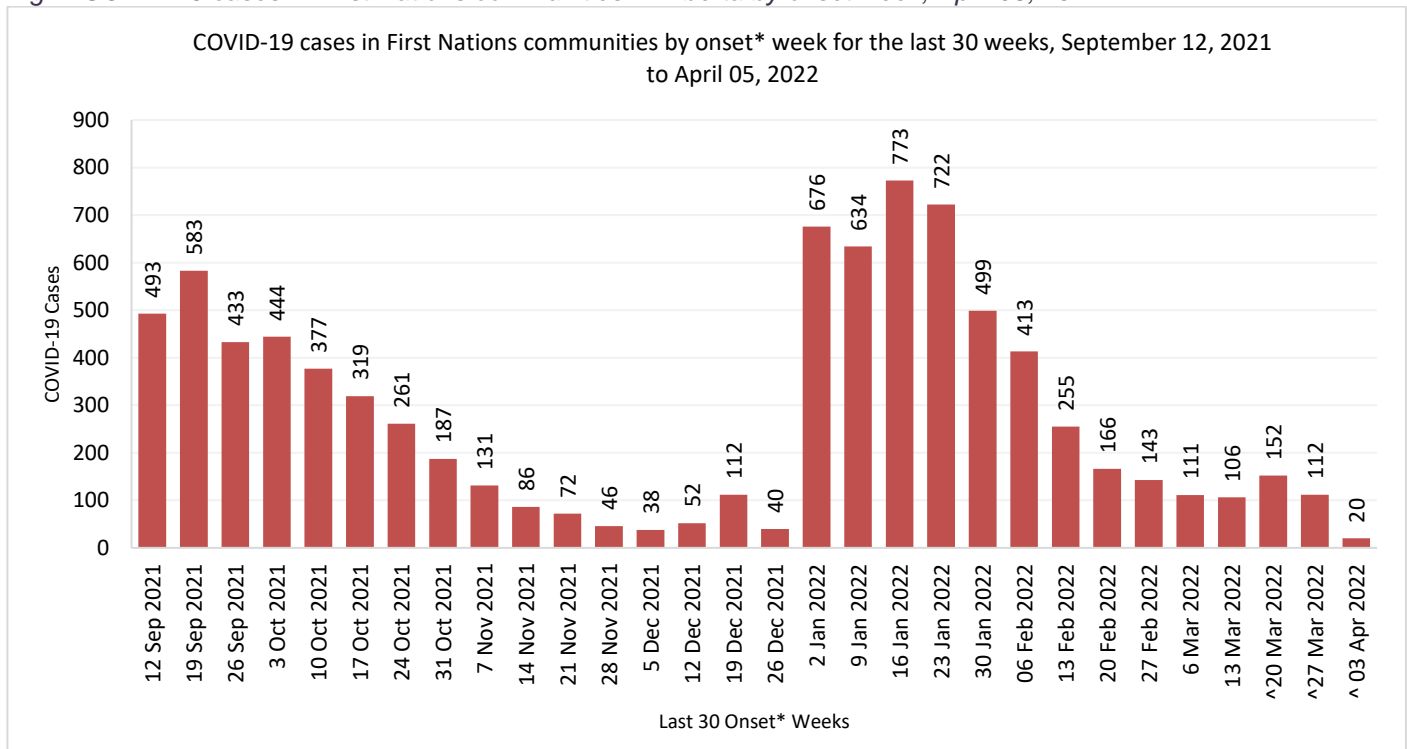
APPENDIX A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta

Fig 1. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by age group and sex, April 05, 2022



Individuals between the ages of 10 and 39 years accounted for 51.1% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 49.6% of all cases in Alberta. Females accounted for 52.5% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 51.8% among all Albertans.

Fig 2. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by onset week, April 05, 2022

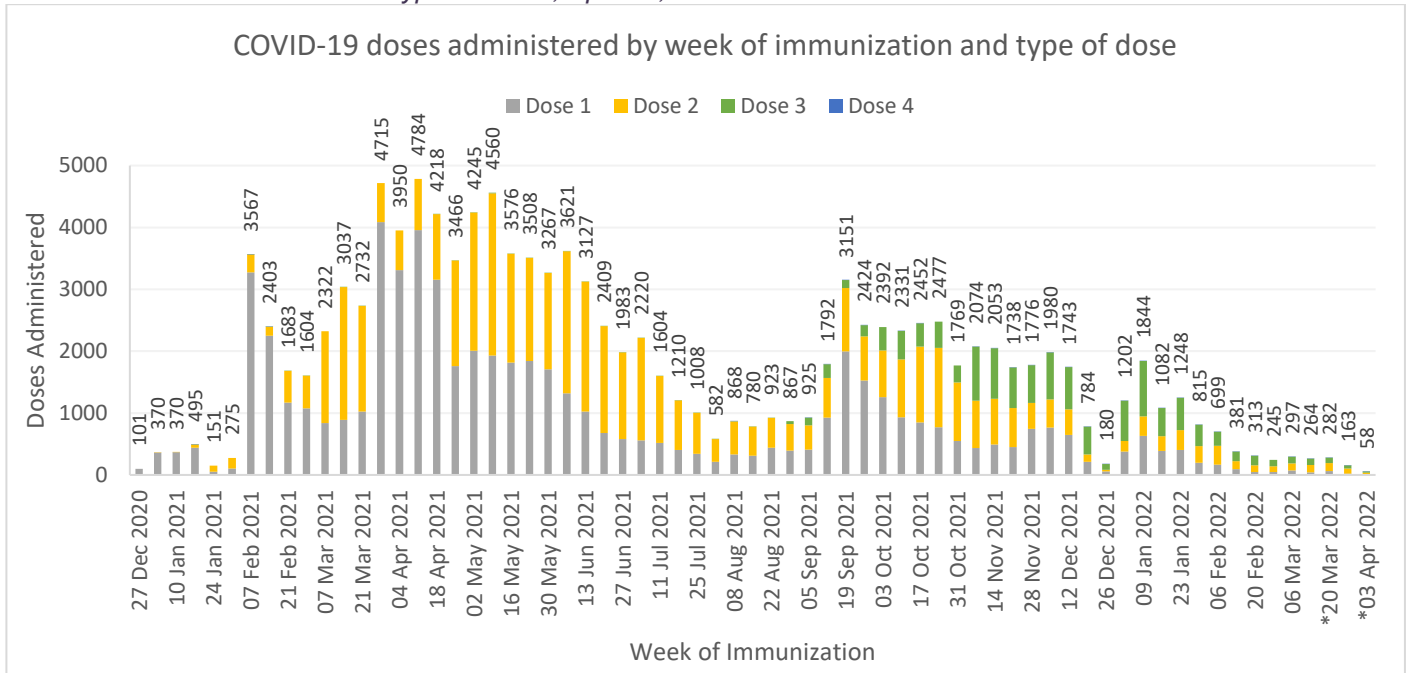


Note: ^Data may be incomplete due to late receipt of lab reports. *Onset date is the earliest of the "symptoms onset" and "specimen collection" date.

A slight increase in the number of lab confirmed COVID-19 cases were in the last two weeks compared to the two weeks before in First Nation communities in Alberta.

Fig 3: COVID-19 Vaccine doses administered to First Nations people living in First Nation communities in Alberta by

week of immunization and type of doses, April 05, 2022



*May be incomplete due to late reporting and data entry

A total of 121,475 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to 60,207 people living in First Nations communities in Alberta, of whom 49,738 have received at least two doses, 11,530 have received at least three doses, and 60 have received 4 doses.