

# Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

## Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: November 4, 2021

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Please email questions about COVID-19 to: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)

While active cases of COVID-19 are now lower in Alberta, the province remains in a state of public health emergency and there is still pressure on the health care system. The B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant continues to spread primarily among unvaccinated individuals and there are active cases in almost all First Nations communities in Alberta. Public health restrictions such as mask wearing indoors, physical distancing and proper hand washing remain in place to reduce the burden on the health care system. The most important intervention to reduce transmission and stop the spread of COVID-19 is vaccination for those eligible aged 12 and older. A full vaccine series of two doses at the recommended interval (8 weeks between doses) is proven to be the best mechanism to significantly reduce the risk of severe health outcomes from COVID-19. On November 8, 2021, all First Nations individuals over 18 in Alberta will be eligible for a third booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine if it has been 6 months since their last dose. This booster dose will be important in protecting First Nations communities where severe outcomes have been more common. The Alberta Influenza Immunization program began on October 18; all Albertans, six months of age and older, are eligible to be immunized. We encourage everyone to get the 'flu shot' to help prevent influenza and related complications and reduce stress on the health care system. ISC-AB and the Medical Officers of Health (MOH) team are available to work with First Nations communities to maintain an enhanced COVID-19 response, which includes supporting First Nations with vaccination, testing, case management, and contact tracing efforts as needed.

### Status Update

#### Number of Cases Reported\* as of November 03, 2021:

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

**Alberta:** There are **6,693 Active Cases** of COVID-19 in Alberta.

**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	Recovered Case	Active Cases	Deaths	Currently Hospitalized	Communities with Active Cases
Living on Reserve in Alberta	13,724	13,037	555	132	54	35
Living on and off reserve in Alberta	27,389	26,237	905	247	117	NA

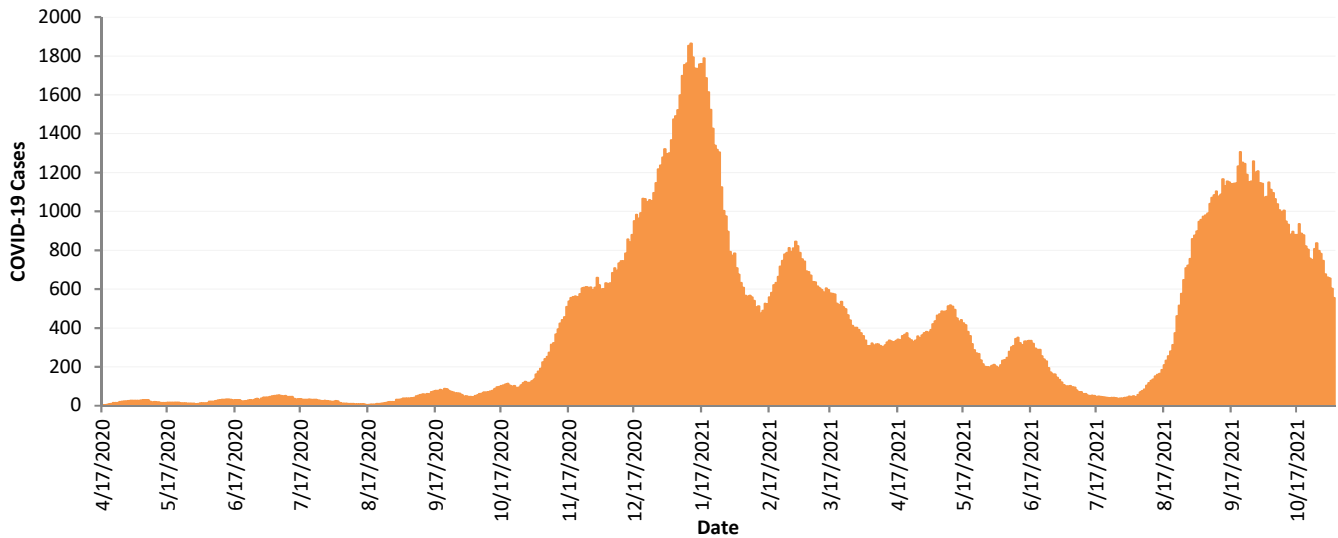


Indigenous Services  
Canada

Services aux  
Autochtones Canada

Canada

Active COVID-19 cases in First nations communities in Alberta by day as of November 03, 2021



COVID-19 in First Nations living on reserve in Alberta

Treaty Area	Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered Cases	Deaths
Treaty 6	6,228	230	5,949	49
Treaty 7	3,264	126	3,090	48
Treaty 8	4,232	199	3,998	35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,724</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>13,037</b>	<b>132</b>

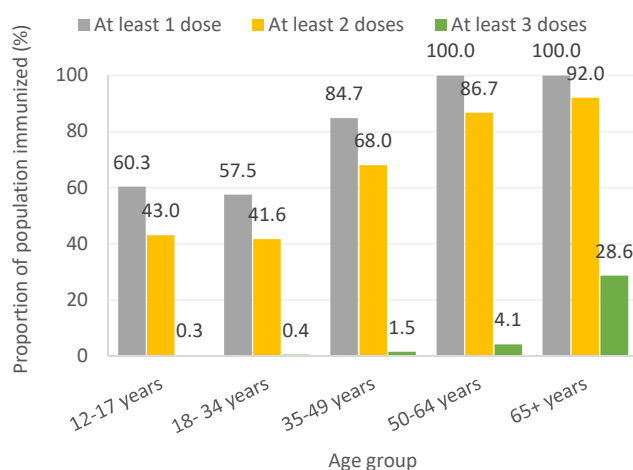
## COVID-19 Vaccine

### COVID-19 Vaccine in First Nations Communities in Alberta as of November 03, 2021

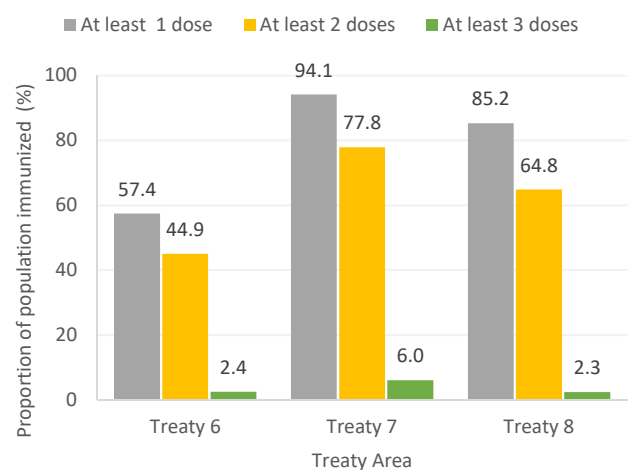
- **89,996** doses have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta
- **48,950** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least one dose
- **38,777** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least two doses
- **2,269** First Nations people living on reserve have received three doses

Approximately **76.5%** of the total population aged 12 years and older living on reserve have received at least one dose, **60.6%** have received at least two doses, and 3.6% have received three doses

Proportion of population immunized by age group and type of dose



Proportion of population aged 12 years and older immunized by Treaty area and type of dose



### 20 Communities

Have vaccinated over 70% of eligible members with the first dose

### 22 Communities

Have vaccinated 50 - 70% of eligible members with the first dose

### 4 Communities

Have vaccinated less than 50% of eligible members with the first dose

## COVID-19 Vaccine New Developments

1. **[New]** On November 8, 2021, all First Nations, Metis and Inuit aged 18 and over, on and off reserve will be able to receive a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine as long as it has been 6 months since their last dose. The need for additional booster doses in First Nations is based on the evidence that this population is more at risk of severe outcomes and on recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). All Albertans over age 70 and those travelling to jurisdictions where AstraZeneca/Covishield are not recognized are eligible as well. Front-line health workers are also eligible for the booster dose if the interval between their first and second dose was less than 8 weeks and as long as 6 months have passed since their last vaccine.
2. **[New]** Alberta vaccine records with QR codes will be the only valid Alberta proof of vaccination accepted by operators participating in the [Restrictions Exemption Program](#) as of November 15. These can be downloaded from the [Alberta COVID Records](#) webpage. As of Oct. 25, Albertans aged 12 and older need to provide **proof of full vaccination** — two COVID-19 vaccine doses — to access restaurants, movies, sporting events and other businesses province wide operating under the province's Restrictions Exemption Program. **Vaccine records from First Nations, military, other provinces, and international travellers will continue to be accepted as proof of vaccination.**
3. **[New]** A telehealth session will be held on November 4, 2021 with updates on vaccine rollout focused on social media strategies aimed at increasing vaccination rates in communities. More information and a recording of the session can be found at <http://www.fnfn.ca>.
4. **[New]** Vaccines for children aged 5 – 11 are still under review. The Pfizer pediatric formulation, which is slightly different than the formulation being used for those over 12 years of age, will be 10micrograms, with a volume of 0.2 rather than 0.3 and will have an orange cap. It can be frozen up to 6 months and should be administered with ultra low dose syringes. There will also be 10 doses per vial rather than 6. Doses have been set aside in USA and will be delivered as soon as Health Canada gives final approval. This could be as soon as mid-November. ISC-AB will support clinics and ensure AHS has accurate numbers for this age group to support vaccine rollout once approved.

## Reminders

1. The Government of Canada announced Mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirements for travelers. Effective October 30, 2021, travelers departing from Canadian airports, and travelers on VIA Rail and Rocky Mountaineer trains, will be required to be fully vaccinated in order to travel. To allow travelers time to become fully vaccinated, there will be a short transition period where they will be able to travel if they show a valid COVID-19 molecular test within 72 hours of travel as an alternative to providing proof of full vaccination. If travelers have not already started the vaccination process, or do not start soon, they risk not qualifying for travel as of November 30, 2021.

## Alberta's Relaunch - Update

- **[New]** Alberta Education's kindergarten to Grade 6 At-Home Rapid Testing Program has been extended to include all K4 to Grade 12 students attending schools in First Nations. Outbreak status is not required for First Nation schools wanting to participate in the program. Rapid screening tests are another tool, along with health measures already in place at schools, to keep students and staff safe. Participation is voluntary for students and staff. Alberta Education will be providing more information about the program to First Nation Education Authorities in the coming days. If you have questions about the At-Home Rapid Testing Program, please email [EDC.SchoolRapidTesting@gov.ab.ca](mailto:EDC.SchoolRapidTesting@gov.ab.ca).
- **Reminder:** Alberta's public health measures remain in place. These measures include limiting gatherings, restricting indoor gatherings for unvaccinated individuals, work from home directives and mandatory masking in schools. More information on the public health measures and the restriction exemption program can be found [here](#).

- **Reminder:** Small and medium sized organizations in Alberta, including Indigenous organizations, employers, and service providers can apply to the [Alberta Health Rapid Testing Program](#) receive free rapid test kits for use in their organization's COVID-19 screening program.

### ***What the Government of Canada and ISC/FNIHB-AB Are Doing***

- **Reminder:** Canadian **businesses, non-profit organizations, or charities** who have seen a drop in revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible for a subsidy to cover part of their commercial rent or property expenses, starting on September 27, 2020, until October 23, 2021. This subsidy will provide payments directly to qualifying **renters and property owners**, without requiring the participation of landlords. The claim period 8 deadline is November 4, but the benefit may re-open. More information is available [here](#).
- **Reminder:** The next period to apply for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy opened on November 1, 2021. More information is available [here](#). The Canada Recovery Benefit, the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit and the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit have also been extended until October 23, 2021. More information is available [here](#).
- **Reminder:** The Government of Canada has extended eligibility to apply for the [Own-Source Revenue in Indigenous Communities Initiative](#) (OSRICI) until November 30, 2021. This initiative supports communities that have experienced a reduction in own-source revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. core community programs and important services to their members. To be eligible for this initiative, Indigenous communities must have experienced an own-source revenue decline in 2020-2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Funding under this initiative is not meant to overlap with other existing COVID-19 measures, such as the Indigenous Community Business Fund, the Indigenous Community Support Fund, or any other COVID-19 measures related to health, economic, and social support. More information on eligibility and application requirements can be found [here](#).
- **Reminder:** Nations that require additional surge supports for COVID-19 response or vaccine clinics including contact tracing, testing, and vaccine administration support should submit a [request form](#) to ISC-AB at: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca).

### ***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](http://www.aivcc.ca).

## Additional Information

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](mailto: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](mailto: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=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUp06\\_wGmSxUc](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUp06_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.**



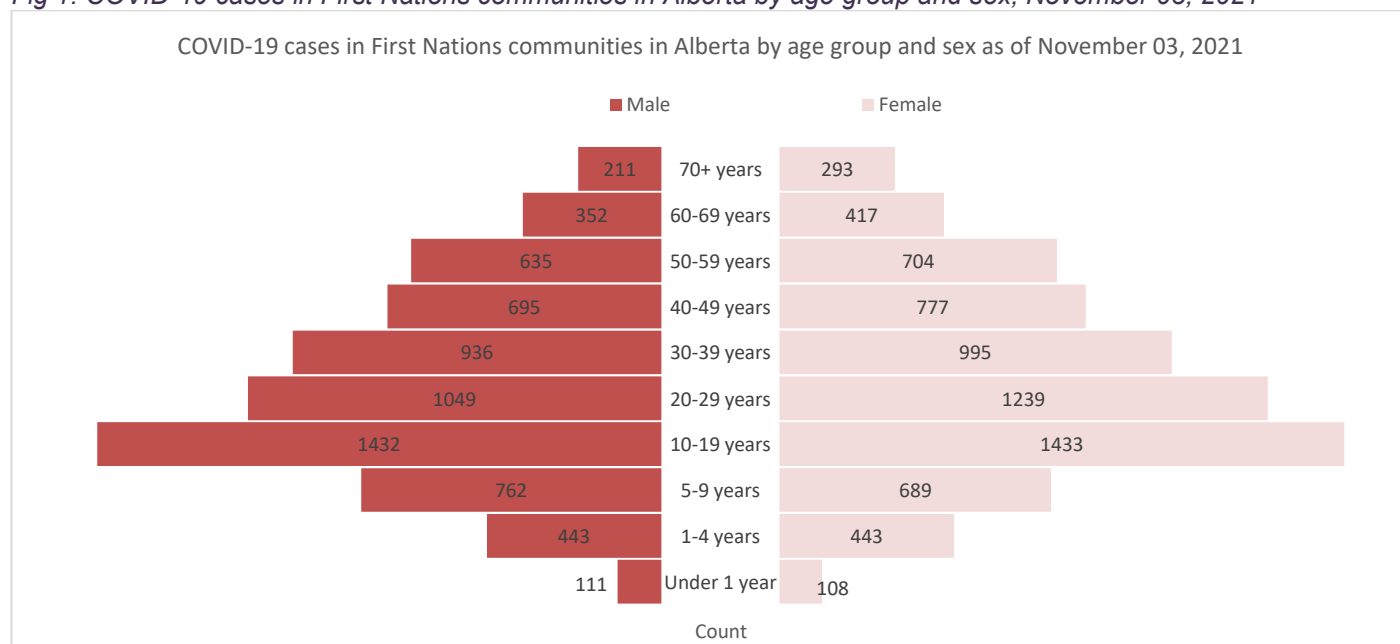
Indigenous Services  
Canada

Services aux  
Autochtones Canada

Canada

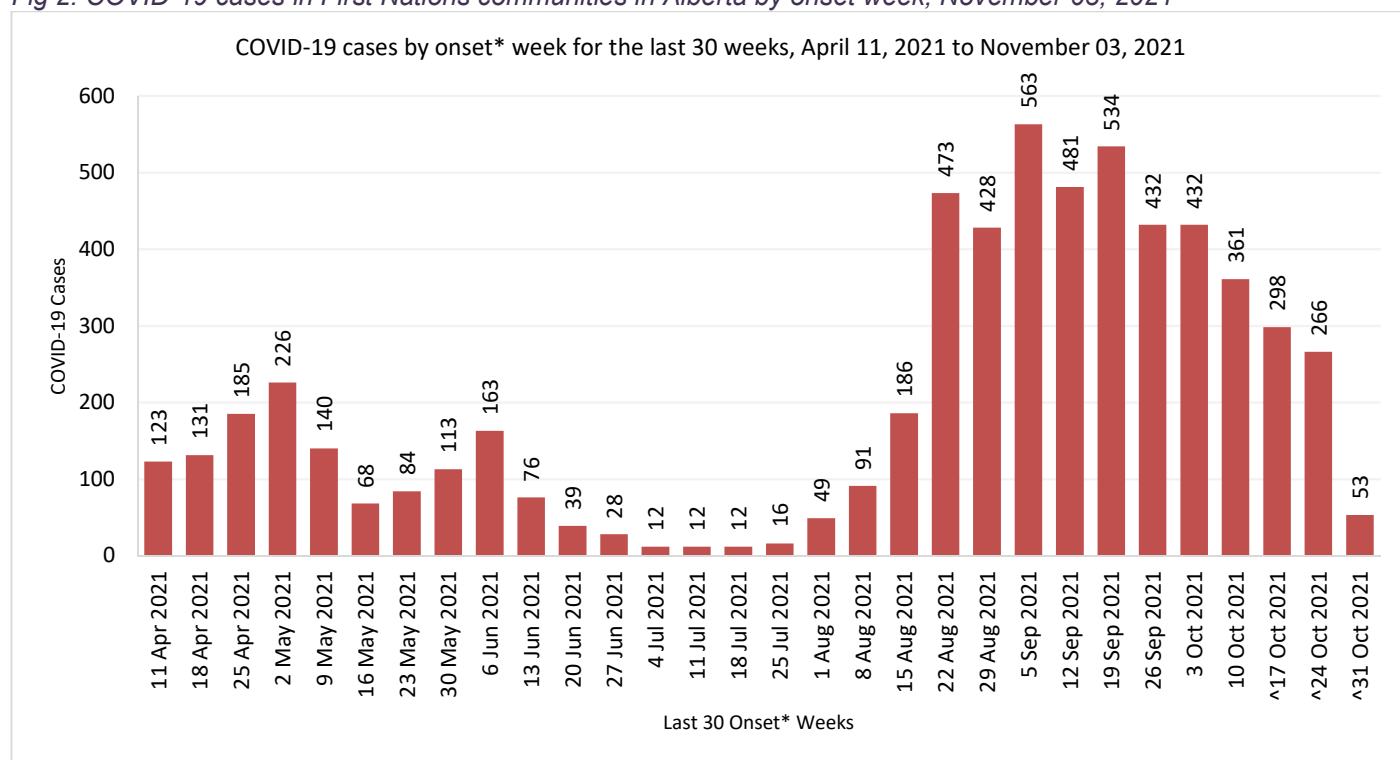
## APPENDIX A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta

Fig 1. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by age group and sex, November 03, 2021



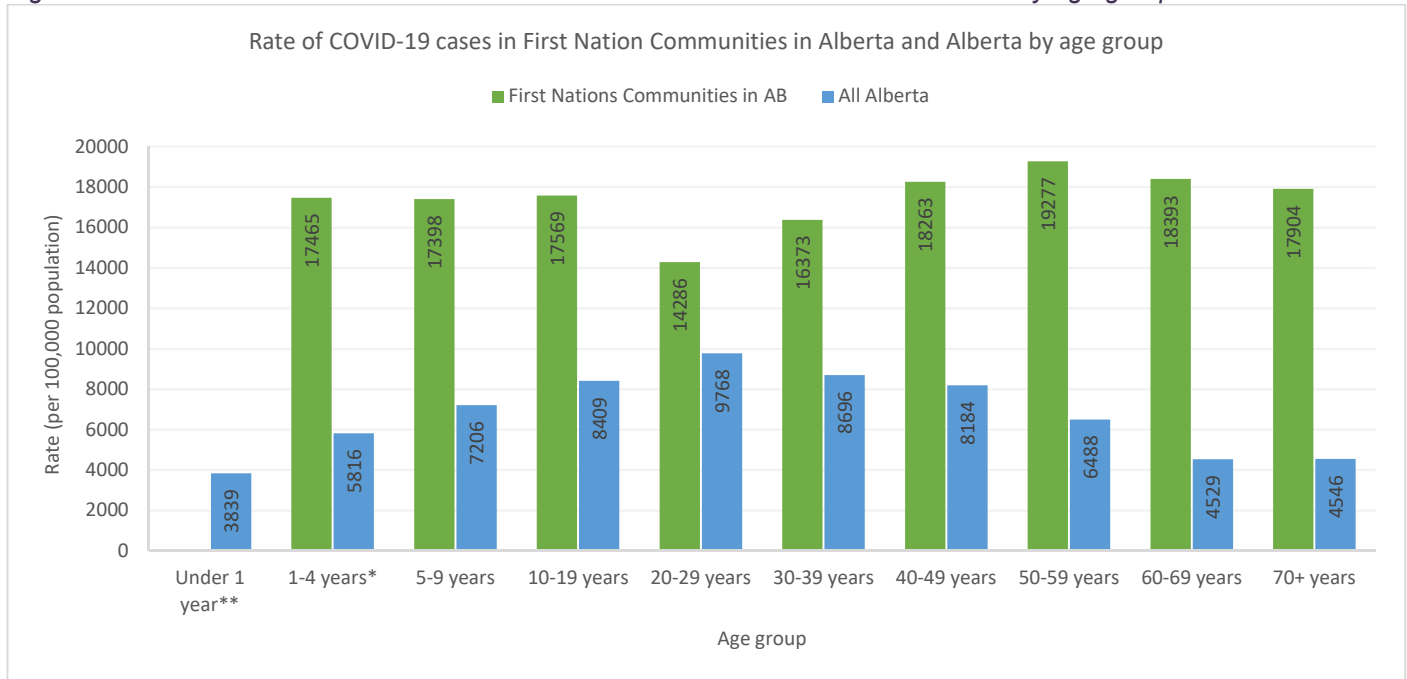
Individuals between the ages of 10 and 39 years accounted for 51.6% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 50.8% of all cases in Alberta. Females accounted for 51.7 % of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 49.7% among all Albertans.

Fig 2. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by onset week, November 03, 2021



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.

Figure 3: Rate of COVID-19 cases in First Nation Communities in Alberta and Alberta by age group

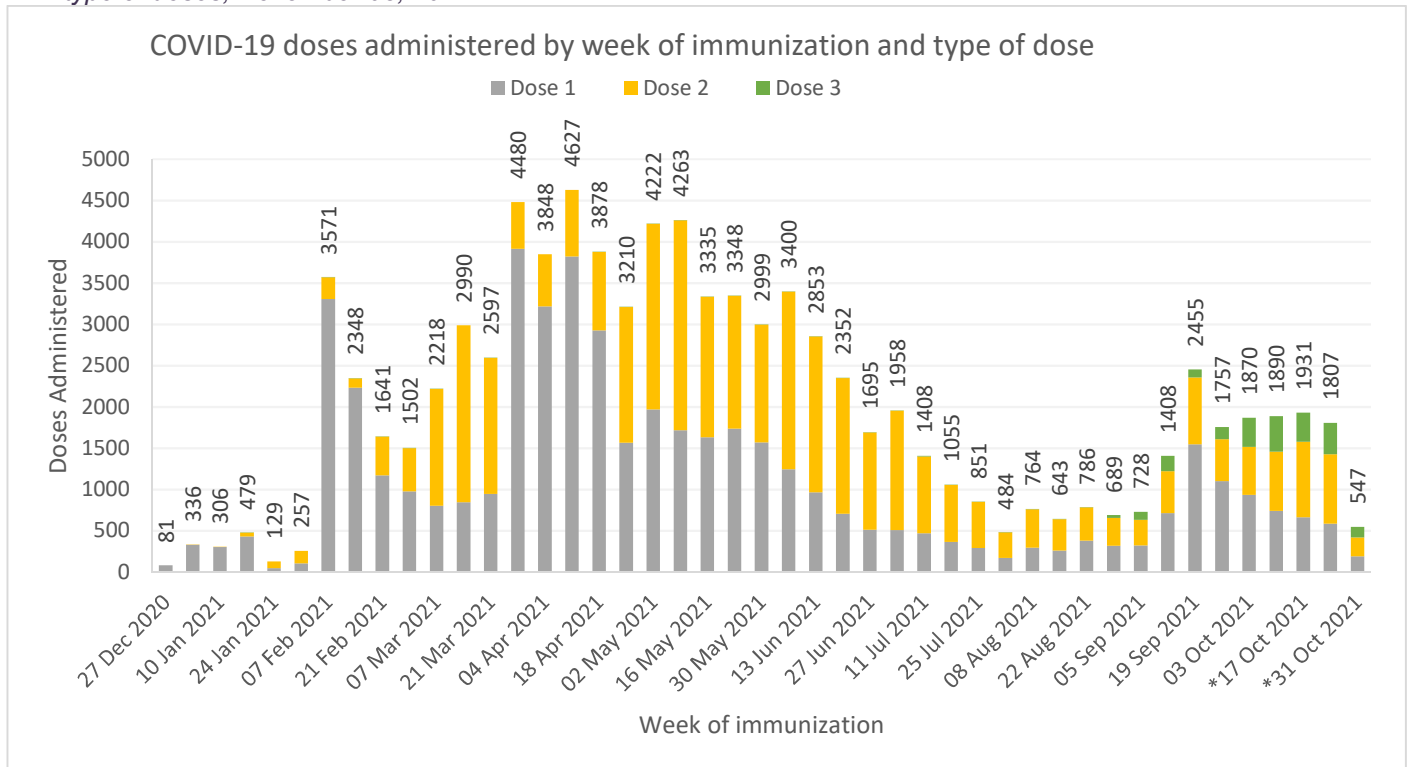


Note: \*\*Due to late reporting and registration of birth, the rate in this age group is not calculated for First Nations communities.

\*Due to late reporting and registration of birth, this rate may be overestimating

There is a higher burden of COVID-19 cases in First Nations in Alberta compared to the general Alberta population in every age group.

Fig 4. COVID-19 Vaccine doses administered in First Nations communities in Alberta by week of immunization and type of doses, November 03, 2021



\*May be incomplete due to late reporting and data entry

A total of 89,996 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to 48950 people in First Nations communities in Alberta, of whom 38,77 have received at least two doses and 2,269 have received 3 doses.