

ISC - Alberta Region COVID-19 Update for Chiefs: *March 31st, 2021*



Updates

A Reminder on the Upcoming Easter Holiday:

The COVID-19 variants circulating in Alberta spread easier than other COVID-19 strains and are more contagious. With the upcoming Easter long weekend, it is important, now more than ever, to limit participation in visits with family, friends and gatherings in our communities. When we come in close contact with other people, we give the virus opportunities to transmit. Recently, many COVID-19 outbreaks in Indigenous communities were associated with people gathering in groups. We ask for your continued patience, vigilance and sacrifice in maintaining all public health guidelines and protocols in your Nations to keep everyone safe until the majority of the population is fully vaccinated. The following measures continue to be applicable to ALL people – including those who have been vaccinated - at this time:

- **Wash or sanitize your hands often;**
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes;**
- **Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;**
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched;**
- **Practice physical distancing;**
- **Wear a mask or face covering when leaving the house;**
- **Avoid all unnecessary travel;**
- **Stay home if you are feeling sick**

Variants and Isolation:

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, isolating yourself is critical in controlling the spread of COVID-19 variants. If you live in a home with many other people, it is strongly recommended that you complete your isolation in a different location or in an isolation hotel. If you are infected with a variant and choose to isolate at home, the period of isolation for all of your contacts could potentially be 24 days. A person infected with a variant of concern in any household needs to finish their 10-day isolation – and have recovered – then the rest of the household is also required to isolate for 14 more days. Close contacts of a variant of concern are recommended to be **tested twice** during their quarantine period. For more information on isolation, please contact your local health centre.

Question of the Day

Q: How does the government ensure the vaccine is safe?

A: Vaccine safety assessment and monitoring is an ongoing and continual process that is carried out throughout a vaccine's life cycle, spanning all phases from development, to market authorization, administration, and post-marketing surveillance. In order for a manufacturer to receive regulatory approval for a new vaccine, they are required to submit all preclinical, clinical and manufacturing data to the [Biologic and Radiopharmaceutical Drugs Directorate](#), the group responsible for approving vaccines at Health Canada, for their own independent review. Once a vaccine is approved, it continues to be monitored and any safety signals are investigated. Canada has a strong vaccine safety monitoring system that remains in place for as long as the vaccine is used. It is important to note that post-approval vaccine monitoring is a process that is similarly carried out in many countries around the world, and Canada's systems are linked with international networks, allowing us to share and access important safety information from other countries where the same vaccine is also in use. These networks include the [Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety \(GACVS\)](#) which was created by the World Health Organization (WHO) and enables quick and efficient responses to vaccine safety issues of global importance. Alberta Region will be communicating further, innovative approaches in the coming weeks to actively monitor side-effects, if any, in First Nations.

National Info

[Latest Non-Insured Health Benefits Program Updates](#)

Alberta Cases:

as of March 30th, 3:30 p.m. MST

AB Total Confirmed (Mar. 29 th – 576 new cases)	147,461
AB Recovered Cases	137,499
Confirmed First Nations On-reserve Cases	7,186
On-reserve Recovered Cases	6,794
On-Reserve Active Cases	318
Calgary Zone Confirmed	57,077
Central Zone Confirmed	11,469
Edmonton Zone Confirmed	56,861
North Zone Confirmed	13,863
South Zone Confirmed	8,052
Unknown Confirmed	139
Deaths due to COVID-19	1,987
On-reserve Deaths due to COVID-19	74
Variants of Concern Confirmed in Alberta	3,649

Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) Deadline Extension

The deadline for new applications for a Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) has been extended from March 31 to **June 30, 2021**. This \$73 billion program provides interest-free loans of up to \$60,000 to small businesses and not-for-profits. Repaying the balance of the loan on or before December 31, 2022 will result in loan forgiveness of 33 percent (up to \$20,000). Full details [here](#).

Regional Snapshot



More Alberta case data can be found [here](#)

Useful Links

Facebook Live on Vaccine Questions TODAY:

Join us for a Live conversation with Dr. Theresa Tam and Dr. Howard Njoo, Canada's Chief and Deputy Chief Public Health Officers, Dr. Evan Adams, Deputy Chief Medical Officer at Indigenous Services Canada, and Dr. Supriya Sharma, Chief Medical Advisor at Health Canada, to have your COVID-19 vaccine questions answered. **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021 AT 11 AM – 11:30 AM** [HERE](#)

Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Vaccine Page:

Vaccines are a critical way to limit the spread of COVID-19. They are effective and safe. Immunization protects your health, as well as the health of your loved ones and the community. This [site](#) has important FAQs and information.

Vaccine Update



Update on AstraZeneca Vaccine in Alberta:

Health Canada has become aware that additional cases of blood clots and low blood platelets have been reported in Europe occurring after immunization with the AstraZeneca vaccine. To date, no cases of these events have been reported in Canada. In light of this evolving information, Health Canada will be issuing additional terms and conditions on the authorizations of the AstraZeneca and Verity Pharmaceuticals/Serum Institute of India vaccines. These will include a requirement that the manufacturers conduct a detailed assessment of the benefits and risks of the vaccine by age and sex in the Canadian context. This information will support the ongoing evaluation of these rare blood clotting events, and allow Health Canada to determine if there are specific groups of people who may be at higher risk. For now, the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine should not be used in adults under 55 years of age at this time while this issue is investigated further. It should be noted that there are **no plans to use this vaccine in First Nations communities**. Health Canada has been in discussions with AstraZeneca on this evolving issue. Detailed info [here](#).

Vaccine Rollout Expanding to Phase 2B:

Alberta Health has notified ISC of a delay in the start of the Phase 2B rollout on-reserve. First Nations will be able to start ordering their vaccine for Phase 2B, once Alberta Health confirms the arrival date of the Moderna vaccine, which is anticipated to be the week of April 12th. As of yesterday, Albertans born in or before 1963 with eligible underlying conditions and off-reserve First Nation individuals born between 1962-1971 are able to book appointments through participating pharmacies that have vaccine supply in Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer. By the end of Phase 2B, all Albertans born in 2005 or earlier (ages 16 and up) with high-risk underlying health conditions will be vaccinated. The full list on the [Alberta COVID-19 website](#) includes: cancer, diabetes, immunosuppression, pregnancy, severe obesity, mental illness or substance abuse disorder that required hospitalization in the past year, learning disabilities or severe developmental delay, solid organ, bone marrow or stem cell transplant recipients and chronic heart, kidney, liver, neurological and respiratory diseases. More info available [here](#).

Vaccine Snapshot

*as of March 30th



16,328 doses of vaccine have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta.



At least **10,194** First Nations people have received their first dose.



At least **3,136** First Nations people aged 65 years and older living in reserve or crown land have received their first dose.



At least **2,552** First Nations people aged 65 years and older have received two doses of the vaccine.



At least **6,134** First Nations people have received two doses of the vaccine.