

# COVID-19 at Holland Bloorview - Links and FAQ

## Staff vaccination at Holland Bloorview

This document contains answers to the most common questions regarding staff COVID-19 vaccination at Holland Bloorview. If you have additional questions, please speak to your manager or email [covid19@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:covid19@hollandbloorview.ca).

### Question key (click links or scroll down):

[I read that the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is available to individuals 12-15 years of age who are at very high risk of severe outcomes. Can I get my child vaccinated? \(UPDATED\)](#)

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**Q: I read that the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is available to individuals 12-15 years of age who are at very high risk of severe outcomes. Can I get my child vaccinated?**

**A:** Unfortunately, at this stage in the province's vaccination plan, children remain ineligible for vaccination. Because there is no vaccine for children under 16, Holland Bloorview is participating in system planning for vaccination for children and advocating for those in a child's ecosystem (including caregivers and educators) to be vaccinated. We will inform families and staff as soon as the provincial framework prioritizes vaccination for children. See below for additional information/background.

**Background:**

- At this stage, there is no vaccine indicated and approved for use for those under the age of 16. The Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines are currently conducting trials in pediatric populations, including report of high effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine in children 12-15 years old.
- The Ministry of Health has released [COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) which provides information for certain populations including children and adolescents.
  - The guidance states: "...the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is not indicated for use for those under the age of 16, a complete series with a Pfizer BioNTech may be offered to individuals 12-15 years of age who are at very high risk of severe outcomes of COVID-19 (e.g., due to a pre-existing medical condition known to be associated with increased risk of hospitalization or mortality)..."
- However, the document also states, "Recommendations for specific populations are subject to vaccine prioritization in accordance with Ontario's [COVID-19 Vaccination Plan](#). " As of today, we remain in Phase 1 which does not include children as a priority population. Phase 2 includes "Individuals with high-risk chronic conditions" but does not spell out high-risk children specifically as part of this guidance.
- We await further information and are watching for evidence that shows vaccine efficacy in children and specific guidance that would indicate vaccine eligibility for children.

**Are clients and their designated caregivers going to be vaccinated?**

Holland Bloorview is advocating for the vaccination of both caregivers and children. We are waiting for Ontario Health to provide us with direction about vaccinating clients who meet the current age requirement and their designated caregivers. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is currently approved for those 16 years and older and both the Moderna and newly approved AstraZeneca vaccines have been approved for those who are 18 years and older. Because there is no vaccine for children under 16, we advocate for those in a child's ecosystem (including caregivers and educators) to be vaccinated.

**What if I experience side effects after my first or second dose?**

If you experience a headache, fatigue, muscle ache or joint pain in the 48 hours following vaccination, but the symptoms are mild enough that that you feel well enough to work, you may continue to do so. If

these mild symptoms persist for more than 48 hours, stay home and call the AWAY line at x 3020 for further direction. If you experience any other COVID-19-like symptoms (respiratory, fever, loss of sense of taste or smell, or any gastrointestinal) following vaccination, remain home and call the AWAY line at x 3020 for further direction.

**How many Holland Bloorview team members have received their first vaccination dose?**

As of January 21, 2021, approximately 400 staff members have received their vaccination.

**Who should I call if I don't hear from Michael Garron Hospital (MGH) about my second dose?**

MGH will be contacting HB staff directly. Some second doses may be unavoidably delayed because Pfizer is not shipping to Canada at this time. The approved period to provide second doses has been [extended to 42 days for healthcare workers in Ontario](#). Please be patient.

**What should I do with my vaccination documentation?**

Whether you received your vaccination through Michael Garron Hospital (MGH) or another employer, Please send all vaccination documentation to [occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca).

**How long is the vaccination appointment? What happens after?**

You should build in one hour for the appointment. This includes screening, getting the shot and monitoring for any immediate side effects. More information about what to expect after getting your shot can be found on this [Ontario Ministry of Health covid 19 vaccine after care sheet](#).

**I'm hesitant to get the vaccine because I fear taking it away from someone who needs it more. Should I get vaccinated now?**

We understand the potential moral and ethical dilemma people may feel about getting the vaccine. Please know that any vaccine availability offered to Holland Bloorview staff is being done in accordance with the province's multi-phased vaccine distribution plan which is grounded in an ethical framework. In addition, Holland Bloorview's vaccine roll-out plan has been reviewed from an ethical perspective and approved by the senior management team. Holland Bloorview is an essential service and we are being vaccinated to protect the vulnerable population we serve. We strongly encourage you to get the vaccine knowing that the choice is yours to make.

**How are you determining who receives the vaccine?**

Prior to hearing the excellent news about vaccine availability, our team (including director of pharmacy Nathan Ho and clinical bioethicist Dolly Menna-Dack) had been working on a prioritized selection process, consistent with the Province of Ontario's ethical framework, to support our vaccine rollout strategy. This work continues both internally and at a system level to ensure equitable access to the vaccine.

For details about our decision-making process, please view our vaccine prioritization backgrounder on HB Connect: [here](#).

**I have an underlying medical diagnosis that increases my susceptibility to COVID-19, will I be moved up the priority list?**

The prioritization list is based on contact with clients and families. The ethical framework we are employing does not differentiate among priority staff based on personal health characteristics.

**What vaccine is Michael Garron hospital using to vaccinate Holland Bloorview staff?**

Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. [Click for additional details](#). mRNA vaccines contain the genetic “recipe” to make a protein that will trigger an immune response. The protein is the spike protein found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19. In response, our body makes antibodies to help fight off infection.

**Will students, researchers, contract and Sodexo employees in food and environmental services have access to the COVID-19 vaccine through Holland Bloorview?**

Yes, these groups are included in our vaccination planning. Those providing direct client care are being prioritized.

**What about non-clinical staff including administration, building services, volunteer services and the Foundation? Will we get vaccinated?**

We are continuing to work on the rollout strategy and all non-clinical staff are included in our planning. More details will be shared as they become available.

**What about teachers in the Bloorview School and daycare staff in Kindercircle?**

We are continuing to work on the roll out strategy and these groups are included in our planning. More details will be shared as they become available.

**What if I've received the vaccine at another place of employment?**

Please let occupational health know. We need to ensure we have an up-to-date list of who still needs to receive a vaccine and who does not. All staff who have been vaccinated should forward the email that they received after their vaccination that shows the date and time they were vaccinated to [occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca).

**Will there be employment implications if I choose not to get vaccinated?**

At this time, it is your choice to receive the vaccine. We are pleased that Holland Bloorview has access to the vaccine and encourage staff to make the best decision for them.

**If I feel sick as a result of getting the vaccine, will I be paid for time off?**

Serious side effects are extremely rare, but if you do get sick, you will be compensated according to your current sick pay plan. Please ask your manager or contact the people and culture team for any clarification about sick leave policy. If you are sick, please inform your manager and occupational health.

**I can only go during a work shift. Will I be paid during this time?**

If possible, we are asking staff to go off-shift. If this is not possible and it has been cleared with your manager, you can use paid working time during your shift to be vaccinated. We encourage staff to select a vaccination date and time that has a minimal impact on client care.

**Where am I on the list? When will I receive my vaccination?**

We are unable to provide this level of information. As we've seen, notification of available vaccines can arrive with little notice. We're doing our best to provide a smooth process and ask for patience and understanding while you wait.

**I was reading in the news that the vaccine is first going to long-term care staff, residents and essential caregivers. Since I don't fall into one of those categories shouldn't I wait and let someone who is higher priority get the vaccine?**

The Government of Ontario has developed a high-level framework for vaccine distribution. Individual hub hospitals (such as Michael Garron Hospital) are having to make decisions about how to distribute vaccine doses to make sure none are wasted. Rest assured, if you have been offered the vaccine it is because you are entitled to it and you are not keeping it away from anyone who needs it more.

**Will there be staff vaccination clinics at Holland Bloorview?**

Michael Garron Hospital has been dedicated as the hub hospital to provide vaccination to Holland Bloorview staff by Ontario Health. We will advise you if that changes.

**Will all Holland Bloorview staff be vaccinated once direct client care and client facing teams have received vaccinations?**

Our ultimate goal is to protect our clients and families by creating a safe ecosystem. During the first phase of our vaccine rollout, we are concentrating on those who are direct-care providers. In line with our vaccination ethical framework, we will reach out to more staff as we move beyond the first phase. We do not have a timeline to share at this time. Please look to future COVID-19 bulletins for more updates.

**What if I have an adverse reaction to the vaccine?**

Adverse reactions are rare, but they can happen. First notify Occ Health then fill out Public Health Ontario's form at [this link](#) and send it to their local public health unit (list [here](#)).

**Does Holland Bloorview have a COVID-19 vaccination goal for staff?**

The goal is 100%. Along with IPAC measures this is the best way to keep our clients safe.

**Once a staff member receives their full dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, will they need to continue wearing a mask while onsite?**

Yes, masks will still be required. Though the Pfizer vaccine is 95 per cent effective after receiving both doses, we have not reached herd immunity so the risk of contracting COVID-19 still exists. We will continue to observe public health's masking, sanitizing and distancing guidelines until advised that it is safe to do otherwise.

**Is the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory?**

No. Like the flu shot, the COVID vaccine is strongly encouraged but not mandatory. We trust that you are the best person to decide what is right for you.

**What if I want to wait and see and maybe get the vaccine later?**

You can definitely decide to decline the offer right now and change your mind later. Please note that we are not able to predict the timing/availability of the vaccine in the weeks and months ahead.

**Do we have confirmation that staff who have received the first dose of vaccine at Michael Garron Hospital will receive their second dose?**

Based on current supplies and expected deliveries from Ministry of Health, Michael Garron Hospital is committed to delivering a second dose to those who have received their first. Those who've had their

first dose have been pre-booked for their second dose. Should MGH need to reschedule or postpone your second dose, they will contact you directly.

**Will Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital be providing vaccinations to clients and family caregivers?**

At this moment, Holland Bloorview has not been designated as a vaccination centre, but this may change in the future. Please note that there is no approved vaccine for anyone under the age of 16. Children's immune systems are very different from adults', and their immune responses can be different at different ages. So the research that's been done on the COVID-19 vaccines for adults needs to be repeated in children of younger ages. This work is underway.

