

Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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This document contains key links and answers to the most common questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccination policy at Holland Bloorview. If you have additional questions, please email occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca, or speak with your manager or a member of the People & Culture department.

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Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

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A teaching hospital fully affiliated with the University of Toronto.

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General questions about our policy

What is Holland Bloorview's vaccination policy for staff, students, trainees, volunteers, contractors and vendors?

Our full policy can be accessed here: [Holland Bloorview's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#)

Notes about the policy:

- Based on a thorough risk assessment, given the unique vulnerabilities of our client population and our current staff vaccination rate, we will be going further than [government directive #6](#) and will be implementing a vaccine mandate policy at Holland Bloorview. It is important to know that 71% of our client population is currently ineligible to be vaccinated because of their age. We must do all we can to protect them.
- Our vaccine policy is in line with recommendations from the Ontario Medical Association, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and the American Academy of Pediatrics. It has been developed in concert with SickKids and CHEO.
- Our mandatory policy is supported by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Kieran Moore, who shared this statement on August 19th, "We recognize that some organizations, where a vast majority of patients are not currently eligible to be vaccinated, will need to go beyond the minimum standard set by our directive. We support SickKids, CHEO, Holland

Bloorview and others in taking these necessary measures to protect patient, family and staff safety.”

- All staff, students, contractors, trainees, volunteers and vendors (including Sodexo, Butcon and Plexus) are expected to be **fully** vaccinated by **October 15th, 2021**, with the exception of only those with a documented medical or human rights exemption. This policy also applies to any agencies and external partners within the hospital (including Kindercircle, Empowered Kids Ontario and the Bloorview School Authority).

Why is it important to have a mandatory vaccine policy at Holland Bloorview?

Our top priority is the safety of our patients, families and staff. At Holland Bloorview, 71% of our clients are currently ineligible for COVID-19 vaccinations because of their age. The proportion of infants, children and youth with compromised immune systems at Holland Bloorview is much higher than in the general population. The rise of the Delta variant, which is much more transmissible than previous strains, now accounts for almost all cases in Ontario. While evidence does not currently suggest that the Delta variant causes more severe disease in children, we are seeing an overall increase in hospitalizations among children in the U.S. based on very high community transmission. High levels of vaccination in eligible individuals is the best strategy to prevent a similar situation here.

How many staff at Holland Bloorview are fully vaccinated?

88 per cent of staff are fully vaccinated as of September 8, 2021. The true number is likely higher as we know some may have not yet reported their vaccination status to [occupational health](#).

What is your target goal for vaccination?

100 per cent of Holland Bloorview staff who are eligible for vaccination.

Can I request an exemption to vaccination?

Yes. Exemptions are only possible for those who cannot be vaccinated for documented medical reasons from a physician or nurse practitioner and/or human rights reasons. The forms are in development and will be shared when ready.

How do I request an exemption and what does an exemption mean for working onsite?

Though they are not ready for distribution today, exemption forms (separate forms for medical and human rights exemptions) will be shared when ready. Anyone who is provided a medical or human rights exemption will need to routinely undergo testing in order to come to work.

If I had COVID-19 previously, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. It is not known how long an immune response to a COVID-19 infection may last so it is recommended and safe for individuals who have had a prior COVID-19 infection to get vaccinated.

If I'm currently on leave, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. You will still need to become fully vaccinated (received two doses of a Health Canada approved vaccination) by October 15, 2021.

If I'm pregnant, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes, the vaccine is safe for those who are pregnant and breastfeeding. Expectant mothers are advised to get the COVID-19 vaccine to protect themselves and their baby from the virus.

How can I get vaccinated?

You can [sign up for your vaccine through the provincial booking system.](#)

How do I access my COVID-19 vaccination data?

You can access your COVID-19 vaccine receipts through the provincial portal (<https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/>). You'll need a green health card, date of birth and postal code. If you do not have a green health card OR the provincial system is not pulling up your information, please contact the Ministry of Health health-care provider helpline at 1-866-212-2272.

How will information about my vaccination status be used? Who will have access to it?

Occupational health, your manager and senior management may have access to your vaccination status as necessary information to enforce Directive #6.

Will vaccinations be made available onsite?

At this time, there are no plans to host an on-site vaccine clinic.

What should I do if I'm already vaccinated?

Ensure you have submitted your vaccine documentation to [Occupational Health](#). Please submit this documentation regardless of whether you were vaccinated through our collaborative with Michael Garron Hospital (MGH) or elsewhere. After your vaccination, you must continue to follow our pandemic precautions by wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), practicing physical distancing whenever possible and washing or sanitizing your hands frequently. If you have lost your proof of vaccination a receipt can be downloaded from the provincial booking site.

What about vaccination boosters?

At this time, vaccination boosters (additional vaccine doses for individuals who are already fully vaccinated) are not widely available in Ontario. If you feel that you may be eligible to receive a booster please contact your primary care physician for more information.

How do we enforce this with tenants and outside contractors that are coming in?

We communicating with tenants, contractors and vendors about our policy. They will be sent a letter outlining requirements and will be required to attest to their adherence to our policy.

How will this change our screening process?

We are reviewing whether this new policy will have an effect on screening. Please stay tuned.

Who vaccination policy applies to

Who does the mandatory vaccination policy apply to?

The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students, tenants, vendors and contractors (including Sodexo, Buttcon and Plexus). All who work across the hospital, including those who work in satellite locations (early learning centre, centralized equipment pool facilities), as well as those who may currently be working from home, must adhere to the policy.

Does the vaccine mandate apply to individuals who work from home or who are not required to go into the hospital?

Yes. Any Holland Bloorview staff member may be called into the hospital for work-related purposes at any time, making double vaccination important for themselves, their colleagues and our client population.

Are we/can we make the same vaccination request of families and clients?

No, we are not asking that families and clients adhere to the policy. Since they have been available, we have encouraged families and eligible clients to get vaccinated.

Vaccine and policy concerns

How is Holland Bloorview supporting staff who have not yet been vaccinated or who may have concerns about vaccination?

We will continue to support those who are not yet vaccinated with information they need to feel more comfortable becoming immunized. Starting September 7, 2021, we will have an educational module to support awareness and understanding of immunization.

Our Occupational Health experts are available for one-on-one discussions about vaccination and individual concerns. Please connect with an Occupational Health Nurse via email at occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca and they will arrange a date and time to speak with you directly.

I work at Holland Bloorview and I disagree with this policy.

Introducing a mandatory vaccine policy for Holland Bloorview was not our first choice, nor was it an easy one to make. As a health-care institution dedicated to the health of children, we know that it is the right thing to do. Like all the policies and procedures Holland Bloorview has implemented throughout the pandemic, the vaccine mandate policy is grounded in the latest scientific evidence, with the safety of patients, families and team members at the forefront.

Is it legal to have a vaccine mandate?

Yes. We are within our rights as an Ontario employer to enforce this policy for all who do not have a medical or human rights exemption.

Will Holland Bloorview be liable for adverse vaccine side effects?

Adverse side effects are rare. Common side effects include fever, fatigue, headache, pain at the site of injection and can last from a few hours to a few days. We will continue to honour current sick leave policies. Holland Bloorview does not assume liability for adverse side effects.

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

If you experience a headache, fatigue, muscle ache or joint pain 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.

Policy FAQs

How is enforcing vaccination ethical?

As a health-care organization, our top priority is the safety of our patients, families and staff. Here at Holland Bloorview, 71 per cent of our patients are not eligible for vaccination. Furthermore, the proportion of infants, children and youth with compromised immune systems Holland Bloorview in the general population, which is an important reason why it is crucial for us to go above and beyond to protect our patients. All COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be safe and efficacious against COVID-19 in clinical trials and through real-world data including against variants of concern. Vaccination builds on a variety of measures already in place at Holland Bloorview, including screening, distancing, hand hygiene, visitor restrictions and masking, and will help us ensure that all individuals who enter our facility in a work, volunteer and/or learning capacity are providing our patients, families and colleagues with a very powerful and safe additional layer of protection. When getting your vaccination, a health-care provider will go through an informed consent process to ensure you understand the benefits and risks of the vaccine.

How do I access the links within the policy?

If you are experiencing difficulties accessing any of the links in the policy, please see HB Connect for all COVID-19 resources or email occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca

Privacy FAQs

What information is released to my manager?

To ensure privacy, your manager will only be privy to whether or not you are in compliance with this policy. Managers are provided with this information in order to offer you support and also for workforce planning purposes. Managers will only be made aware if you have not completed any of the following; education module, testing, and/or submitting proof of vaccination and/or medical or non-medical exemption.

Vaccine FAQs

What is the difference between fully vaccinated and fully immunized?

Fully Vaccinated: an individual who has received two doses of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or a single dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series that is listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization or approved by Health Canada.

Fully Immunized: an individual is defined as fully immunized ≥ 14 days after receiving their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or their first dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series that is listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization or approved by Health Canada.

What COVID-19 vaccines are recognized under this policy?

Currently, there are four authorized vaccines in Canada: Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine. All COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be safe and efficacious.

What are the time lines for staff to get their vaccines?

Staff are encouraged to get their vaccination as soon as possible. In order to be in compliance with the policy, staff must have received their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or their first dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series that is listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization or approved by Health Canada by October 15th, 2021.

Who can I talk to if I have concerns about the vaccine?

Resources like [this great one](#) by the Centre for Effective Practice and our own [Myths vs. Facts infographic](#) can help you make an informed decision. We also recommend speaking with team members who have been vaccinated to understand their experience and what you can expect.

The following supports are also provided to enable access to vaccination and information: Individual, confidential appointments with members of our Occupational Health and Wellness team to discuss questions and concerns with a subject matter expert; Upon request, department-specific education and information sessions can be hosted; All-staff town halls and information about vaccines and [vaccine availability on our website](#)

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

Education Module FAQs

Who completes the education module?

Only those who have not submitted proof of vaccination and/or medical or non-medical exemption will be required to complete the education module in addition to participating in the testing program.

When does the education module need to be completed?

The module must be completed by October 15th, 2021

What is included in the education module?

The education module will include the following components:

- How COVID-19 vaccines work;
- Vaccine safety related to the development of the COVID-19 vaccines;
- Information about the vaccine and safety/effectiveness
- The Benefits and effectiveness of vaccination against COVID-19; and possible risks of vaccination
- Risks of not being vaccinated against COVID-19; and,
- Possible side-effects of the COVID-19 vaccination.

How do I access to WISE outside of hospital?

If you are unable to access WISE, please let the Occupational Health and Wellness team know and they will email you the education module. You will be asked to email the Occupational Health and Wellness team confirming you have read the module.

Do I have to complete the education module if I already had my first dose?

Yes, staff will still be required to complete the education module and testing until their have reached fully immunized status.

Testing FAQs

Who must be tested under the new COVID-19 Vaccination Policy?

Starting September 7, 2021, all staff who come on site at any Holland Bloorview location, who are not fully immunized, must be tested before they are allowed to come on site.

What type of test do I have to take?

Testing will be saliva PCR and will be performed at home. If you have questions on how to perform the test, please contact occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca

How long do my results take?

Results will be available within 48 hours and will be monitored for non-compliance. You are expected to maintain all records of your test results and provide copies to the Occupational Health and Wellness team when requested.

- **If your test is positive (+):** You will receive a phone call from a member of SickKids COVID Testing Centre and Public Health with instructions within 48 hours. Employees must stay home and follow-up with Holland Bloorview's Occupational Health and Wellness Team (x3020).
- **If your test is negative (-):** You will not receive a phone call. You can access your test results at <https://covid19results.ehealthontario.ca>
- **If your test can not be processed:** You will receive a phone call from a member of the SickKids COVID Testing Centre and you will be required to take a re-test.

Can I work while waiting for my results?

Yes, you can continue to work while you wait for the results of your test.

Do we have to pay for the testing?

Employees are not required to pay for testing.

Do I still need to complete the testing requirements if I work solely from home?

All staff who come on site at any Holland Bloorview location, who are not fully immunized, must participate in the COVID-19 testing program when they are coming on site. This includes staff who normally work from home but are asked to come on site. Staff who are working from home do not need to complete the testing requirements; however, they must still be compliant with the policy by October 15th.

Do I still need to complete the testing requirements if I only see clients at outdoor community visits?

Yes, all staff, regardless of where they conduct their work, must complete the testing requirements if they are not fully immunized as of September 7th, 2021.

How long do I need to continue testing?

You will be required to continue with our COVID-19 testing program until you are fully immunized. This means you will continue testing until 14 days after you complete a COVID-19 vaccine series.

If I work at an offsite location (i.e. CEP, nursery schools, etc.) where can I drop off my testing sample?

Testing kits can be picked up and dropped off at the hospital's main reception.

Why do only unvaccinated people have to get tested if COVID-19 is still transmissible even if you are vaccinated?

While fully immunized people can get COVID-19, they are much less likely to get severe disease or transmit COVID-19 to someone else compared to unvaccinated people. Vaccination adds an important additional layer to our bundled infection prevention and control measures that we have had in place throughout the pandemic. Due to the high level of protection offered by vaccines in addition to our other infection prevention and control measures, testing is not necessary for fully immunized staff at this time.

Do I have to be tested if I already have the first dose?

Yes, you will be required to continue with our COVID-19 testing program until you are fully immunized. This means you will continue testing until 14 days after you complete a COVID-19 vaccine series. For example, if you receive your second dose on October 1, you must continue twice weekly testing until October 15th, 2021.

What if I have to come on site unexpectedly / not at my regularly scheduled hours?

Staff must drop off a completed test kit in advance of going to work. After dropping off their test, staff can go to work.

Do I have to be tested even if I don't have symptoms?

Yes, all employees who come on site at any Holland Bloorview locations, who are not fully immunized, must be tested, even if they do not have symptoms (asymptomatic). Staff who experience symptoms should not come to work and should contact the AWAY line at ext. 3020.

I would prefer to do regular tests instead of getting vaccinated. Will testing continue to be an option for me after October 15th, 2021?

As of October 15th, 2021, if you are not fully vaccinated and/or do not have a documented medical or human rights exemption, testing will no longer be an option. We will look at all options available to us as an employer to enforce the policy, including suspension without pay and termination of employment.

I am in the process of applying for a medical or non-medical (human rights) exemption, do I have to get tested?

Yes. Staff who are applying for a medical or non-medical (human rights) exemption will need to participate in the COVID-19 testing program.

Do I have to continue testing if I have an approved medical or non-medical (human rights) exemption?

Yes. Staff who have an approved medical or non-medical (human rights) exemption will need to participate in the COVID-19 testing program.

Holland Bloorview is not my main employer. Can I submit test results from another organization?

Yes, we will accept your test results from another health-care organization. You must still take the test twice weekly, and you will need to keep copies of your test results and provide them to the Occupational Health and Wellness team when requested.

Why did we chose the main reception as the pick-up, drop off location?

We did discuss different areas for the tests to be picked up and dropped off and felt that main reception was the easiest place for staff to access. The drop box is a locked box so employee information is kept safe and secure.

Non-compliance FAQs

What will happen to me after October 15th, 2021 if I am fully vaccinated but not fully immunized?

If you are fully vaccinated but not fully immunized by October 15th, 2021, you will be required to continue with our COVID-19 testing program until you are fully immunized. This means you will continue testing until 14 days after you complete a COVID-19 vaccine series. For example, if you receive your second dose on October 15, you must continue twice weekly testing until October 29.

What if I only have one dose of a two dose COVID-19 vaccine series on October 15th, 2021?

If you are partially vaccinated (one dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series) by October 15, you will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence until you receive your second COVID-19 vaccine. Once you have received your second dose, you are required to submit your documentation to Occupational Health and Safety. You will also be required to continue testing until 14 days after you are fully vaccinated.

If I am placed on an unpaid leave of absence and I receive my second dose before the leave of absence ends, how quickly can I return to work?

Once you have received your second dose, you are required to submit your documentation to Occupational Health and Safety and await clearance from the Hospital before you will be able to return to work. You will also be required to continue testing until 14 days after you are fully vaccinated.