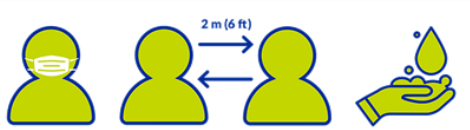
Bulletin #150: COVID-19 Information
June 10, 2021



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COVID-19 Bulletin

Screening criteria for staff and physicians

Please review the screening questions for employees and physicians here. All posters are available on the Coronavirus Skyline page.

If you answer yes to any of the questions, you are not to enter the facility. You must contact Employee Health at 1-833-978-2580 for further screening and possible referral to a COVID-19 assessment centre.

Patient and visitor screening questions can be found here.

Employee Health and Wellness is available daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to answer any questions or concerns – please call 1-833-978-2580.

COVID-19 vaccination information

Horizon's upcoming COVID-19 vaccination clinics, including walk-in availability, are listed here.

As of June 10, GNB is reporting that 504,675 New Brunswickers have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 Vaccine. That is 72.8% of eligible individuals.

Interchangeability of authorized COVID-19 vaccines

In alignment with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) statement on interchangeability of authorized COVID-19 vaccines in a vaccine series, Public Health will move forward with the following policy direction for second doses:

For those who received **mRNA** vaccine as first dose, where supply is readily available, the same mRNA vaccine should be

offered for the second dose. **Note:** that when the same mRNA vaccine product is not readily available, or is unknown, another mRNA vaccine recommended for use in that age group should be offered to complete the vaccine series.

For those who received **AstraZeneca / COVISHIELD** vaccine as first dose and are 55 years (born in 1966) and older, offer either AstraZeneca / COVISHIELD or a mRNA vaccine for the second dose. The recommendation to offer mRNA as the second dose is based on expert opinion and on the following:

- The risk of VITT after the first and second doses of the AstraZeneca / COVISHIELD vaccine
- The possibility of increased short-term reactogenicity with a mixed schedule
- Emerging data on immunogenicity of a mixed schedule of the AstraZeneca followed by the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

For those who received **AstraZeneca / COVISHIELD** vaccine as first dose and are under 55 years, a mRNA vaccine should be offered for the second dose. Only offer an AstraZeneca / COVISHIELD dose if they refuse a mRNA.

Further details on NACI Rapid Response: Interchangeability of authorized COVID-19 vaccines and Summary of the rapid response are available.

COVID-19 guidance for primary care providers in a community setting

The document has been updated from the Feb. 19, version. The following changes have been made:

- Changed messaging from "Testing for COVID" to "Referral for Testing" throughout document
- Removed section on Nasopharyngeal swabs
- Updated information on Personal Protective Equipment
- Clarified circumstances that require a negative pressure chamber throughout document
    - General: What you need to know
    - Appendix D
- Updates statements within section COVID-19 Immunization on:
    - Recommendations for prioritization and sequencing
- Physicians and provision of COVID-19 Vaccines

The entire document can be viewed online.

Reporting adverse events following immunization

In the of reporting Adverse Events following Immunization (AEFI) related to COVID-19 vaccines, a delayed rash onset has been observed when immunizing with mRNA vaccines. A wide variety of rashes are being reported, they remain benign and they have been observed more frequently following Moderna

than Pfizer vaccine. Some of those reported reactions develop soon after vaccination, while others arise up to 14 days after.

Rashes that require medical intervention or treatment are considered reportable as an AEFI. When reporting these rashes, the temporal criteria specified in the Appendice 5.0 Summary of Reporting Criteria, located in the New- Brunswick Immunization Program Guide (NBPIG).

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is currently reviewing the national reporting guidelines on AEFI including the temporal criteria for rashes with delayed onset. They will be issuing an updated AEFI reporting user guide that will include COVID-19-specific annex.

Until this review is finalized at the federal level, Public Health is accepting a reportable temporal criteria for rashes following COVID-19 vaccines **for up to 14 days**.

Vaccine injury support program

The federal government has announced the implementation of the Vaccine Injury Support Program (VISP). This program was created to ensure that all people in Canada who have experienced a serious and permanent injury as a result of receiving a Health Canada authorized vaccine that was administered in Canada on or after Dec. 8, 2020, have fair and timely access to financial support.

The program is open to all individuals, regardless of age. Eligible individuals may receive income replacement indemnities; injury indemnities; death benefits; coverage for funeral expenses; reimbursement of eligible costs such as otherwise uncovered medical expenses however the amount of financial support an individual will receive will be determined on a case by case basis.

The VISP website can be found here.

GNB update

When available, today's GNB news release can be accessed here.