



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

AstraZeneca Vaccine

1. Who is eligible to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine?

In Ontario, individuals **40 years of age and older in 2021** are now eligible to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine at pharmacies, local clinics, and through primary care settings.

Please note that the availability of vaccination appointments will be based on the number of vaccine doses that RCD receives each week. Because of this, appointment dates may not always be available. Please continue to check for appointment availability regularly.

2. Where can I register/book an appointment for the AstraZeneca vaccine?

Residents 40 years of age and over in 2021 will be able to book vaccination appointments at local participating pharmacies ([view the link to see a list of eligible pharmacies](#)). You must have an appointment to get vaccinated at a participating pharmacy. You can book pharmacy vaccination appointments directly through the pharmacy's website, provided at the link above.

Additional appointments for the AstraZeneca vaccine will be provided at public clinics and can be booked online through the *Renfrew County and District COVID-19 Vaccine Registration System* at www.rcdhu.com. Those who are currently eligible for vaccination are encouraged to register online as this is often quicker. It is recommended to ask a family member or friend to assist if they are unable to do so themselves.

If you cannot register online, call RCDHU at 613-735-9724 or 1-800-267-1097 ext. 200. Please leave one message only.

Note: Appointments using AstraZeneca will be clearly identified as part of the booking process since there are age restrictions for its use.

3. How does the AstraZeneca vaccine work?

The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is a non-replicating [viral vector-based vaccine](#).

Viral vector-based vaccines use a virus, which has been modified to be harmless, as a delivery system to build your immunity. When injected into the body, these COVID-19 vaccines produce a surface protein from the SARS-CoV-2 virus, specifically the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein. The spike protein does not make you sick -- it helps your body develop a strong immune response without exposing you to the virus that causes

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COVID-19. Many people around the world have safely received viral vector vaccines for COVID-19.

4. Is the AstraZeneca vaccine safe?

The risk of a serious outcome from being infected with COVID-19 is far greater than the risk of a serious side effect from the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. Health Canada has reassured Canadians in recent days and weeks that the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine continues to be safe and effective at protecting against COVID-19 and encourages people to get immunized with any of the COVID-19 vaccines approved in Canada. There is a robust monitoring system in place for vaccines in Canada. The best vaccine is the one that is available to you.

5. Should I be concerned about the risk of blood clots?

After vaccination with AstraZeneca there have been very rare reports of blood clots (thrombosis) and low blood platelet counts (blood cells that help the body stop bleeding).

Based on Health Canada's review of available data, no specific risk factors have been identified. Therefore, [Health Canada is not restricting the use of the vaccine at this time](#), and recommends use for those 18 years of age and older. The potential risk of blood clots is very rare, and the benefits of the vaccine in protecting against COVID-19 outweigh its potential risks. The [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) confirmed [3 cases after administering more than 700,000 doses](#). Once a vaccine is on the market, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada have a strong vaccine safety monitoring system in place.

In the very rare event that someone experiences unusual blood clots with low platelets, there are treatments available.

6. When will I receive my second dose of the vaccine?

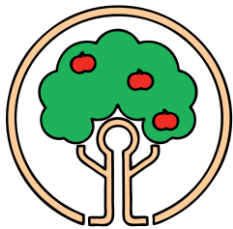
To increase the number of individuals benefiting from the first dose of vaccine, the province is following recommendations from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#) to extend the second dose of AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine/COVISHIELD vaccine to **4 months after receipt of the first dose**.

You will receive notification on when you can register for your second vaccination appointment. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

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7. Do I get to choose which vaccine I will receive at a local clinic?

No, currently residents will not get to choose which vaccine they get. This will be based on provincial distribution, availability to local regions and supply. Depending on vaccine availability, RCD residents could receive **any** of the approved vaccines. Remember, the best vaccine, is the one that is available to you. **RCDHU cannot confirm in advance which vaccine will be administered at particular public clinics.**

Additional Resources:

RCDHU: [COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Health Canada: [The Facts About COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

Health Canada: [AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine: What You Should Know](#)

Health Canada: [National Advisory Committee on Immunization: Summary of updated AstraZeneca vaccine statement of April 23, 2021](#)

Government of Ontario: [What to Expect When You Get a Vaccine](#)

Government of Ontario: [Ontario Safely Expands Age Eligibility for AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine to 40+](#)

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