

COVID 19 UPDATE



Date:

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RD of Alberta ISC-FNIH

Proof of Vaccination:

FNIHB AB is currently working with Alberta Health to ensure that all COVID 19 immunization data completed in First Nations communities is available through the provincial registry. We expect that these vaccination records will be accessible through Alberta Health and online in the coming weeks. If individuals are unable to access a Digital Record, “Records from Vaccination Appointment” can be used in the interim. Individuals 12 and older can get a card sized vaccine record through the new express system at [alberta.ca/ CovidRecords](https://alberta.ca/CovidRecords) It's fast and easy no account required. Enter your personal healthcare number, date of birth, and month and year of one of your vaccinations. Download your card and print it out or save it on your phone. If you were vaccinated recently, it may take up to 2 weeks for your records to be available online. Participating Registry Agents can also print out your vaccine card from [alberta.ca/ CovidRecords](https://alberta.ca/CovidRecords) , at no cost, starting September MyHealth Records is still available for Albertans 14 and over who wish to use a verified account to view their health records, including immunizations. If you do not have an existing MyHealth Records account, the process does consist of several steps, including the need for a verification code to be physically mailed to the individual. The new express option [alberta.ca/ CovidRecords](https://alberta.ca/CovidRecords) would be a quicker option for those that do not currently have a MyHealth account. Valid Government of Alberta Vaccination QR code (when available currently under development).

Rapid Testing Kits for Businesses:

Small and medium

sized organizations in Alberta can now access Rapid Testing kits at more pharmacies in their communities. This includes Indigenous organizations, businesses and nonprofits. Individuals can request the free COVID 19 rapid tests for their workplaces. Register through the new small and medium sized organization portal [here](#) .

Eligible organizations must agree to the following

- keep rapid tests and not resell them.
- limit use to within Canada
- screen employees according to the guidelines provided by relevant provincial and territorial governments.
- demonstrate they are using these tests before further supplies are provided.
- Collect and report on usage

Question of the Day

Q: How can we help people who are afraid of needles?

A: Immunization against COVID-19 is very important, and we understand that some people may have needle fears or live with development challenges that make it more challenging to receive the vaccine. There are supports available to help reduce pain and distress associated with

immunization and improve the comfort and overall experience of those who have needle phobia or live with development challenges that may interfere with them being immunized against COVID 19. Ask your care provider about AHS' Commitment to Comfort program or visit ahs.ca/vaccine-comfort for more information. Commitment to Comfort provides resources to help make a person's immunization experience more comfortable, including distraction techniques and how to access and use numbing cream. To access a specialized AHS COVID 19 Low Stimulus immunization clinic, which is a service for people with behavioral or special needs who require a quieter, less stimulating environment, speak with your Health department about how they may be able to accommodate your needs.

Third Dose Update:

The province has expanded eligibility for an additional dose of COVID 19 vaccine to more immunocompromised Albertans to align with recent recommendations made by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization . 5 months after the second does, a third dose of COVID 19 vaccine are also available for seniors living in congregate care. These individuals are at the highest risk of severe outcomes and potential spread within congregate living sites.

Immunocompromising conditions that qualify for an additional dose at least eight weeks after a second dose now include:

- Recipients of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cell therapy.
- Individuals with moderate to severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g., DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott Aldrich syndrome).
- Individuals with Stage 3 or advanced HIV infection and those with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.
- Individuals undergoing immunosuppressive therapies (e.g., anti B cell therapies, high dose systemic corticosteroids, alkylating agents, antimetabolites, or tumor necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors and other biologic agents).
- Transplant recipients, including solid organ transplants and hematopoietic stem cell transplants.
- Individuals with chronic kidney disease who are receiving regular dialysis.
- Individuals in active cancer treatment (chemotherapy, immunotherapy or targeted therapies), excluding those receiving only hormonal therapy, radiation therapy or surgery.
- Individuals on certain medications for autoimmune diseases, including rituximab, ocrelizumab and ofatumumab We do expect the province to make further specifications in regard to 3 rd doses, specifically for Indigenous Albertans as well, in the near future. ISC will continue to work with your Nations' Health Centers to implement the anticipated changes.

Alberta First Nation Vaccine Statistics

- **76,898 doses of vaccine** have been administered in **46 Nations (bands) in Alberta.**
- **At least 67.4% of First Nations people living on reserve or crown land have received their first dose**
- **100% of First Nations people aged 65 years and older living on reserve or crown land have received their first dose.**
- **97.1% of First Nations people aged 65 years and older living on reserve or crown land have received two doses of the vaccine.**
- **At least 52.7% of First Nations people living on reserve or crown land have received two doses of the vaccine.**

Data from North Zone –As of October 4th, 2021

| Conf Cases | Active Cases | Recovered | Hospitalized | Intensive Care | Deaths |
|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|--------|
| 39,996 | 3984 | 35,697 | 148 | 11 | 285 |

Global Dashboard for COVID – 19

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

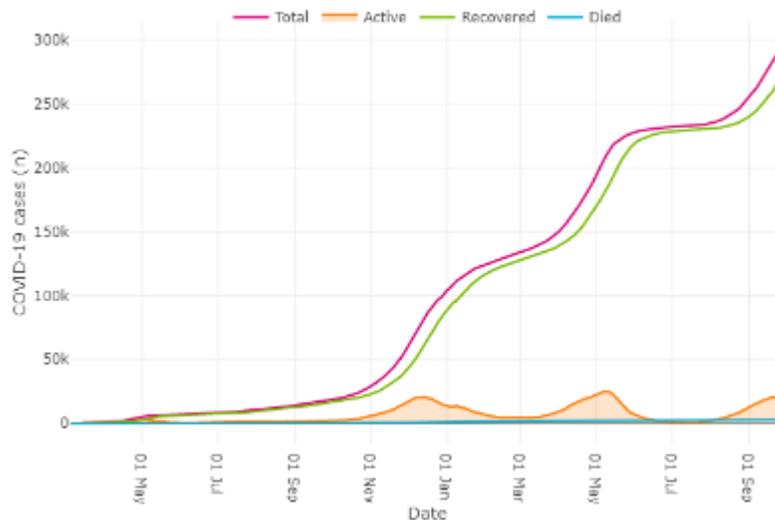
Provincial statistical Data as of October 4, 2021

| ➤ Dr Hinshaw's CBC Afternoon Update | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| ➤ 304,502 | ➤ CONFIRMED CASES |
| ➤ 663 – | ➤ Oct 4th |
| ➤ 19,456 | ➤ Active Cases |
| 282,268 | ➤ Recovered Cases |
| ➤ 1094 | ➤ Hospitalizations |
| ➤ 252 | ➤ ICU |
| ➤ 2,778 | ➤ Total Deaths |

Cases in Alberta:

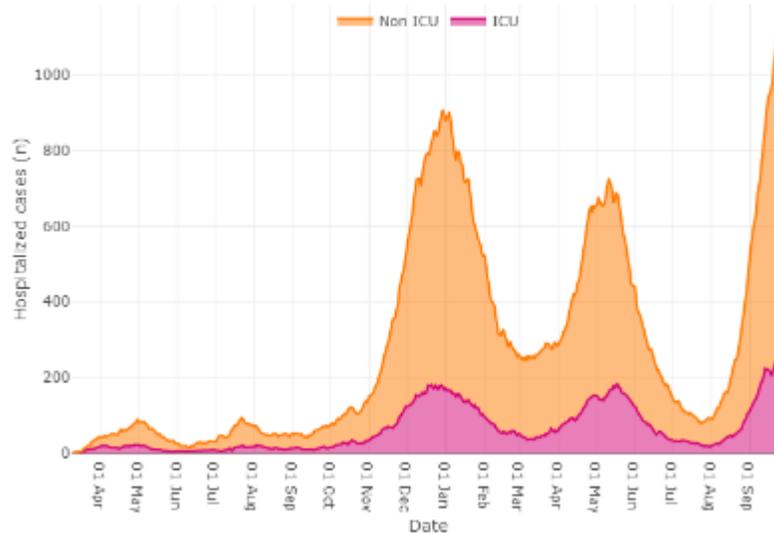
There are currently 20,215 active cases of COVID-19 in Alberta, an increase of less than one per cent compared to Sept. 24 when there were 20,040 active cases.

For the seven-day period ending Sept. 29, there was an average of 1,656 new daily cases of COVID-19, compared to 1,592 for the previous week (Sept. 16-22), a 4.0 per cent increase. New case numbers varied from zone to zone. South Zone reported a 10.3 per cent decrease in new cases compared to last week, whereas North Zone reported an 18.5 per cent increase. Edmonton Zone reported the highest number of new cases over the past week, with 2,814.



COVID-19 hospitalization, count and rate in Alberta by vaccine status

A total of 820 individuals were in non-ICU hospital beds with COVID-19 on Sept. 29 compared to 850 on Sept. 22, a one-week decrease of 3.5 per cent. However, a new record high number of individuals in non-ICU hospital beds with COVID-19 was set on Sept. 27 with 865. The previous record was 736 on Jan. 4, 2021.



ICU Capacity Update

AHS continues to do all it can to ensure we have enough ICU capacity to meet patient demand, including opening additional spaces and redeploying staff.

We currently have 374 ICU beds open in Alberta, including 201 additional spaces (a 116 per cent increase over our baseline of 173). AHS has opened four additional ICU surge spaces in the past seven days.

Critical care triage has not been implemented, and our hope is that we will not have to implement it. It will only be implemented if all efforts to increase ICU capacity are exhausted – that has not happened yet. Any patient who requires mechanical ventilation is currently able to receive it.

There are currently 298 patients in ICU, the vast majority of whom are COVID positive. The number of patients in ICU has decreased by three per cent in the past seven days. Provincially, ICU capacity (including additional surge beds) is currently at 80 per cent. Without the additional surge spaces, provincial ICU capacity would be at 172 per cent.

- In Calgary Zone, we currently have 138 ICU beds, including 72 additional spaces. Calgary Zone ICU is operating at 75 per cent of current capacity (including 78 COVID patients in ICU)
- In Edmonton Zone, we currently have 159 ICU beds, including 87 additional spaces. Edmonton Zone is operating at 82 per cent of current capacity (including 106 COVID patients in ICU)
- In Central Zone, we currently have 26 ICU beds, including 14 additional spaces. Central Zone ICU is operating at 85 per cent of current capacity (including 19 COVID patients in ICU).
- In South Zone, we currently have 36 ICU beds, including 19 additional ICU spaces. South Zone ICU is currently operating at 83 per cent capacity (including 26 COVID patients in ICU).
- **In North Zone, we have 15 ICU spaces (split between Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray), including nine additional ICU spaces. North Zone is currently operating at 73 per cent capacity (including 10 COVID patients in ICU).**

Expansion of Criteria for Third Doses

Last week, the Government of Alberta expanded eligibility for an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine to more immunocompromised Albertans to align with recent recommendations made by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization.

Individuals with advanced HIV infection and additional patients receiving medications that impact their immune systems are among those now able to get an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

A full list of immunocompromising conditions that qualify for an additional dose at least eight weeks after a second dose is available on the Alberta Health website.

Third doses of COVID-19 vaccine are also available for seniors living in congregate care. These individuals are at the highest risk of severe outcomes and potential spread within congregate living sites.

Additional mRNA doses are available to Albertans who are travelling to a jurisdiction that does not accept visitors who have been vaccinated with Covishield/AstraZeneca or mixed doses.

Eligible Albertans can book an immunization appointment online at an AHS clinic or pharmacy, attend a walk-in clinic, contact a doctor's office, or call Health Link 811.

Update on Variants of Concern

With the increase in cases of COVID-19, the lab has moved back to targeted screening of positive samples for strain-typing. From Sept. 21 to Sept. 27, the average percent of positive samples that were strain-typed was 35 per cent. Of those strain-typed, the rolling average was 99.4 per cent Delta variant. Strain-typing takes a number of days, and these numbers may change as lab data becomes available.

Other notable COVID-19-related information:

- As of Sept. 29, a total of 298,172 cases of COVID-19 have been detected in Alberta and a total of 12,739 individuals have been hospitalized, which amounts to 4.3 individuals for every 100 cases. In all, 275,200 Albertans have recovered from COVID-19.
- From Sept. 23 to Sept. 29, 106,525 COVID-19 tests were completed, an average of 15,218 tests per day. During this period, the daily positivity ranged from 9.9 per cent to 12.0 per cent. As of Sept. 29, 5.5 million tests have been conducted and 2.4 million individuals have been tested.
- The R value, also known as the reproduction number, describes the ability of a disease to spread. It tells us the average number of people that someone with COVID-19 will infect. An R value of 1 means an infected person will infect one other person on average. Values below 1 mean transmission is decreasing; above 1, transmission is increasing. The R value is updated every two weeks. From Sept. 13 to Sept. 19, the provincewide R value was 1.04 and the previously reported value was 1.12. The R value for Edmonton and Calgary was 0.97 and 0.94, respectively, while the rest of the province had an R value of 1.15.
- Alberta Health has not resumed school reporting.

Protective Effects of COVID-19 Immunization

Vaccines remain one of our most powerful tools in the fight against COVID-19. They are safe, effective and they save lives. Representatives from AHS, the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta, the Alberta Medical Association, and the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary have penned an editorial and paper — shared with media last week — laying out the facts about vaccine effectiveness and safety. We encourage you to read it and share it, especially with those who may be reluctant to receive the vaccine.

The data compiled by Alberta Health on vaccine outcomes shows that immunization will protect most people from getting sick, having to go to the hospital or dying if they get infected with COVID-19. We hope this data can help inform and support your conversations with family members, friends, loved ones and networks, about the importance and effectiveness of COVID-19 immunization.

COVID-19 Immunization During Pregnancy

Since Sept. 9, eight more pregnant Albertans have been admitted to ICU due to COVID-19. The situation remains serious in Alberta hospitals. From July 15 to Sept. 28, 14 pregnant individuals have been admitted to ICU due to COVID-19. All were unimmunized.

AHS continues to strongly urge those who are pregnant, trying to become pregnant, or have recently delivered, to get both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. Vaccines are safe and effective, and they are the best way to protect mother and baby from COVID-19.

Several resources are available (including a recently updated fact sheet for practitioners) to support your conversations with patients and clients who are pregnant, trying to become pregnant, or who have recently delivered:

Web: ahs.ca/vaccinepregnancy

Updated: Alberta COVID-19 Immunization in Pregnancy Factsheet for Practitioners

COVID-19 Immunization in Pregnancy

COVID-19 and Pregnancy, Birth, and Postpartum and Breastfeeding: Information for Expectant and New Parents Public Health

Alberta COVID-19 Immunization in Pregnancy Factsheet for Practitioners

Videos: Dr. Sue Chandra on Why COVID-19 Vaccine is Safe During Pregnancy & Dr. Erin Bader on How the COVID-19 Vaccine Protects Mother and Baby

Posters: COVID-19 Vaccines & Pregnancy 8.5x11 | 11x17

Update on Janssen Vaccine

Some Albertans are inquiring about the availability of the Janssen (aka Johnson & Johnson) vaccine in Alberta. Earlier this year, Canada received a shipment of Janssen vaccines that were later determined to be developed at a location that did not pass FDA inspection. Alberta is currently in discussions with the National Operations Centre about potentially requesting a small shipment of doses of Janssen vaccine, when safely available.