

Questions and Answers: Developed from October 7th, 2021 Primary Care Session with information current to October 12, 2021

Vaccine Passport

- ***What can we share with patients who were vaccinated in other provinces re: how they prove their out-of-province vaccination status or how they obtain the BC passport? Is it required?***

A patient's [territorial, provincial or international proof of vaccination](#) is required and will be accepted by the Province of BC. People new to BC can apply for a BC Vaccine Card immediately upon arrival. There are 2 steps to get a card:

1. Get a B.C. Personal Health Number (PHN).
 - Call [1-833-838-2323](tel:1-833-838-2323) and one will be created for you
2. Upload your out-of-province proof of vaccination to our [online form](#) (post link in chat during session <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof#province>)

Vaccines

- ***When will children aged 5-11 be offered the vaccine?***

BC is developing its strategy for immunizing children. Officials are encouraging families to register their children for the shot through the provincial [Get Vaccinated](#) portal. Parents who register will receive a notification when it's time to book a vaccine appointment for their child.

- Pfizer has requested Health Canada approve its vaccine for kids aged 5 to 11.
- Children aged five and older are now included in the [public health order](#) mandating masks for indoor public spaces in B.C.

- ***What is the latest direction on third doses?***

Dr. Henry is giving consideration to third doses for certain communities. So far, only seniors in long-term care homes and people who are clinically extremely vulnerable have been offered a third dose of the vaccine.

- Those with moderate-severe immunocompromising conditions may be offered a third dose based on NACI guidance. More details are available at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/register#immunocompromised>
- Information on the efficacy of this approach is available on the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\) website](#).

- ***What constitutes a valid exception to mask wearing?***

Ministry Mask Policy:

- In accordance with guidance from BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, exceptions to the policy must be applied for people under 12 years old, people unable to

wear a mask because of a health condition or physical or mental impairment, people unable to put on or remove a mask without help from another person and/or to accommodate site-specific circumstances (e.g., staff/visitor/patient masking may not be required when eating/drinking at retail food establishments or cafeterias).

- People who are required to wear a mask and are able to wear a mask, but who choose not to as a matter of preference, are not exempt.

Data and Clinical Information

- ***Where can I get the latest information and resources on Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) for my clinic?***

Island Health has comprehensive IPAC resources [available online](#), including a new patient [screening tool](#) (under the heading Urgent and Primary Care Resources) and inquiries can be sent to IPAC.enquiries@islandhealth.ca; please include “Primary Care” in the subject line.

Excellent research available from [BCCDC](#) as well as the [Coronavirus Variants Rapid Response Network](#).

- ***If a person who is fully vaccinated gets COVID 19, what are the symptoms and level of severity typically?***

Symptoms are generally milder in nature, and shorter duration. The [BCCDC COVID-19 Situation Report](#) provides data related to severity of illness.

- ***What do we know about waning efficacy of the mRNA vaccines over time and the clinical relevance to infection risk?***

The primary series is expected to provide desired protection, but protection has waned over time. Health Canada and Provincial Health Officers are considering the incremental benefits and risks and will provide guidance. More information is available on the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\) website](#).

Practice Norms and Advice for Clients

- ***Elderly patients (fully vaccinated) are asking about safety of traveling within Canada to visit family for Christmas - your advice, please.***

Travelling within Canada can be done safely when immunized, the federal government has announced a requirement for travellers to be vaccinated, which will improve that safety further. Masks, vaccines, and measures you can take personally, like distancing and handwashing can go far to protect travellers of all ages.

- ***If a person is fully vaccinated, wearing a mask and using hand sanitizer, what are the actual risks of transmission?***

The risk of transmission is extremely low. We know from staff working in COVID-19 cohort units, when PPE is worn correctly, hand hygiene is performed and encouraged and cleaning

occurs regularly as described by BCCDC, that transmission is rare if at all. We have not had transmission between a known case and staff or patients, or between patients when PPE is worn.

- ***Until we have over 90% of entire population (kids included) vaccinated, do we need to social distance and also keep people out of our waiting rooms?***

[According to the BCCDC](#), “physical distancing or maintaining a distance of two metres between two or more people is no longer required, and “capacity limits for higher occupancy waiting rooms/areas are no longer required.” The Province of BC is beginning to use the phrase “respectful distance”, which can be different for individuals based on cultural norms and personal preferences. In addition, clinics are no longer required to have a COVID-19 specific site plan, and are instead required to have and use a [communicable disease plan according to WorkSafeBC](#).

- ***Do we still need to keep patients 2 meters apart in waiting rooms?***

As above, individuals should feel safe in waiting rooms, and the respectful distance required for each will be different. As long as patients are wearing a mask it isn't always necessary to maintain a strict 2 meter distance, particularly in a waiting room. Ensure all patients waiting are wearing a mask, provide alcohol based hand rub for them to use and make sure the space is thoroughly cleaned once a day and all touch points are cleaned once a day.

- ***What is the risk of fully vaccinated individuals passing on Covid to those not able to be vaccinated (ie kids under 12)?***

Symptomatic individuals are the most likely to transmit virus, particularly close household contacts. Individuals whom are symptomatic should try to stay home until feeling better. Fully vaccinated individuals, if they become infected with COVID, recent data suggests that immunized individuals will clear the virus more rapidly than those who are unimmunized.

Resources Shared

Presentation by Dr. Michael Benusic, Medical Health Officer

Resources within the presentation:

- [BC Centres for Disease Control COVID-19 Surveillance Dashboard](#)
- [McMaster Forum: Coronavirus Variants Rapid Response Network – COVID-19 Living Evidence Version 21: 06 October 2021](#)
- [BC Centres for Disease Control Two-dose SARS-CoV-2 vaccine effectiveness \(VE\) update Presentation to: BC CDC Grand Rounds September 28, 2021](#)
- [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\) rapid response: Additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine in immunocompromised individuals following 1- or 2- dose primary series](#)
- [Province of BC: Information for people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised](#)
- [ATTESTATION for moderate to severely immunocompromised patients requiring a third COVID-19 vaccine dose](#)
- [British Columbia \(BC\) COVID-19 Situation Report Week 38: September 19- September 25, 2021](#)
- [Reported side effects following COVID-19 vaccination in Canada](#)

Infection, Prevention and Control Resources

- [COVID-19 Information Sheet for Environmental Service Providers in Health Care Settings](#)
- [Ministry Mask Policy](#)
- Island Health IPAC resources [available online](#), including a new patient [screening tool](#) (under the heading Urgent and Primary Care Resources)
- IPAC email inquiries; please include “Primary Care” in the subject line – IPAC.enquiries@islandhealth.ca