

**Date:** April 22, 2021

**To:** ZEOCs  
Acute Care Centres  
Physicians

**From:** Vaccine Task Force

**RE:** Decrease in second dose spacing for immune compromised Albertans

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As announced by Alberta Health today, the province has decreased the period between first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccine for certain immunocompromised individuals from 16 weeks to a minimum of four weeks. The interval between doses is being shortened for Albertans undergoing specific kinds of cancer treatments or who are on medications that result in a level of profound immune compromise.

Those included in this updated guideline:

- Transplant recipients
- Individuals currently undergoing (or about to start) cancer treatment that includes chemotherapy.
- Clients who are on specific medications. For example, patients on strong immunosuppressant medications (e.g. rituximab) should be immunized at a time when they are most likely to mount an immune response.

This updated guideline does not include individuals who are ONLY being provided hormonal therapy, radiation therapy or surgery to manage cancer.

The latest research shows that certain immunosuppressed individuals cannot develop a sufficient long-term response to the vaccine and need their second dose sooner. Based on this evidence, a decision was made to offer these individuals their second doses earlier than the recommended spacing for other Albertans.

Clients may require specific spacing to ensure their vaccine is most effective and doesn't interfere with their treatment. Refer to the attached poster outlining recommendations for vaccination and cancer treatment.

Anyone who meets this criteria can book a second dose by calling Health Link at 811. Second dose bookings cannot be made through pharmacies, or through the AHS online immunization booking tool at this time.

Alberta is operating on the honour system for this population. A doctor's note or other proof of eligible criteria is not required. We encourage everyone in this cohort to speak with their healthcare provider to help them understand if their condition is included, or to answer any questions or concerns regarding this updated guideline.

Thank you for your continued support.

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