

COVID-19: Information for solid organ transplant recipients

UPDATED: Oct 22, 2024

COVID-19 continues to circulate in British Columbia. Solid organ transplant recipients remain at risk of severe diseases from COVID-19.

BC Transplant and the transplant medical teams strongly recommend patients get fully vaccinated and receive an additional vaccine dose against COVID-19 this fall 2024.

Vaccination helps reduce your risk of severe disease that could potentially result in hospitalization and death.

If you test positive for COVID-19, please let your transplant team know. Transplant recipients are among the patient groups who have priority access to COVID-19 treatments in B.C.

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Getting vaccinated

All pre- and post-transplant patients are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and get additional vaccine doses as they become available.

Primary Series

A complete primary vaccine series for solid organ transplant recipients aged 5 years and up involves **two doses** of a COVID-19 vaccine. Two doses of COVID-19 vaccines offer better protection for people who are immunocompromised and is safe and recommended for transplant recipients who have never been vaccinated. A third dose may also be recommended by your healthcare team. If you were vaccinated before your transplant, you may have only received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and that is acceptable.

A complete primary vaccines series for transplant recipients aged 6 months to under 5 years involves **three doses** of the COVID-19 Moderna SPIKEVAX vaccine, or **four doses** of the Pfizer BioNTech COMIRNATY vaccine.

Additional Doses

Transplant recipients (age 6 months and up) may have also received additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine starting approximately six months after their primary vaccine series.

Fall 2024 Dose

The updated vaccine will increase protection against SARS-CoV-2 infection and COVID-19 symptomatic and severe disease compared to older vaccines. It is highly recommended to get an additional COVID-19 vaccine dose this fall 2024.

Protection will wane over time after vaccination or SARS-CoV-2 infection. Recipients of additional doses receive much better protection against infection than those who only had their primary series doses.

This is in line with the latest guidance from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) (dated May 3, 2024), which strongly **recommends an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine starting in the fall of 2024 for those individuals 6 months of age and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised and previously vaccinated against COVID-19.**

NACI recommends waiting at least 6 months after your last dose to get another dose. However, you may receive an additional dose any time after three months as there are no safety issues with getting it earlier.

If you recently had COVID-19, you should wait at least six months to get your additional COVID-19 vaccine dose, but there are also no safety issues with getting it earlier.

Register with www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca or the BC Vaccine Line (call 1-833-838-2323) to be notified when to book each vaccine dose.

The BC Centre for Disease Control has the most current information about [getting a vaccine](#).

You will still need to be vigilant and continue to assess your own level of risk tolerance for choosing activities and interactions within the guidelines set out by Public Health. The [BCCDC's Personal Toolkit](#) is a good resource for considering what tools to use and when for preventing COVID-19 (<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks>).



COVID-19 treatments for transplant recipients

Transplant recipients are among the patient groups who have priority access to COVID-19 treatments in B.C. The **medications should be started within five to seven days** of experiencing signs and symptoms of infection. You will need a positive COVID-19 test to be eligible.

- If you develop [cold or flu-like symptoms](#), you should get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible (rapid antigen or PCR).

- **If you test positive, contact your transplant care team as soon as possible.** They will determine if you might benefit from available treatments.
- If you are eligible, the preferred, most effective and safer treatment (remdesivir) for transplant patients requires two or three days of intravenous (IV) infusions at a health authority infusion facility. Your transplant care team will work with the health authority where you live to ensure you receive it.
- PAXLOVID is an oral COVID-19 treatment available in B.C.; however, it is **not recommended for transplant patients** because it interacts with transplant medications.

This document is current as of Oct 22, 2024. Check the [BC Transplant](#) or the [BCCDC](#) websites for the most current available information and updates.