

February 5, 2021

TO: Medical Health Officers  
Public Health Nurse Managers  
Immunization Coordinators  
Immunization Providers

This document addresses questions regarding COVID-19 immunization for residents in long-term care facilities and personal care homes that have had or may have a COVID-19 outbreak.

#### General COVID-19 Recommendation

- Ensure all staff, visitors and residents (where possible) follow infection prevention and control measures at all times: <https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/news/service-alerts-emergency-events/covid-19/PPE-infection-prevention-control/Pages/Home.aspx>.
- When possible, ensure that well uninfected residents are physically distanced from symptomatic residents.

#### Questions and Answers

**1. Should well/asymptomatic residents be immunized with the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes, they should be immunized as soon as possible with their first dose or second dose (at the recommended interval) providing that there are no contraindications, regardless of facility outbreak status.

**2. If a well/asymptomatic resident has been tested for COVID-19, should their COVID-19 immunization be deferred until their results are received?**

No, it is unnecessary to wait for test results before proceeding with COVID-19 immunization, providing that there are no contraindications.

**3. What are the immunization recommendations for a resident with confirmed COVID-19 disease?**

- a. If a client has not received their first vaccine dose, their first dose should be deferred until their recovery from their acute illness and they have met the criteria for discontinuation of isolation (it is not necessary to wait 90 days to immunize after disease confirmation).
- b. If the client has already received their first dose, their second dose should be given upon their recovery from their acute illness when they have met the criteria for discontinuation of isolation (it is not necessary to wait 90 days to immunize after disease confirmation).

**4. Should a resident who had previous COVID-19 infection be immunized?**

Yes, they should be immunized, as long as they have recovered from their acute illness (do not need to wait 90 days) and there are no other contraindications, as they are extremely vulnerable and there is no clear evidence on the length of disease immunity among this population.

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**5. What if a resident gets COVID-19 after a dose of COVID-19 vaccine?**

The COVID-19 vaccines are not live vaccines and cannot cause COVID-19 disease. The most likely explanation is that the resident was in the incubation period after an exposure to COVID-19. The incubation period can be up to 14 days before COVID-19 symptoms present.

**6. Once a resident has completed their COVID-19 immunization series, do they need to continue practicing COVID-19 public health measures?**

Yes, they need to continue practicing COVID-19 public health measures such as social distancing, mask wearing and handwashing.

**7. What are the immunization recommendation for healthcare providers in long-term care facilities or personal care homes?**

In the current context of limited vaccine supply and to allow for the protection of a larger number of at-risk individuals, immunization with COVID-19 vaccine may be delayed for 90 days following a PCR-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection if the infection occurred before the first COVID-19 vaccine dose, as reinfections reported to date have been rare within the first three months following infection. However, if this is challenging from a feasibility perspective, these individuals may be immunized before the 90 days.

If a healthcare worker develops SARS-COV-2 infection between receiving doses 1 and 2 of their COVID-19 vaccine series, the 90-day deferral does not apply and their second dose should be provided as long as the healthcare worker has recovered from the acute illness and criteria have been met for them to discontinue isolation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Saqib Shahab  
Chief Medical Health Officer

cc: Brad Havervold, Executive Director, Community Care Branch, Ministry of Health