

September 16, 2021

Dear Patients,

COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Accommodations for Healthcare Workers

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) announced in August that all staff and physicians who work in long-term-care homes and seniors' assisted living facilities must be fully vaccinated as of October 12, 2021. For those not currently vaccinated, a first dose must take place no later than September 13, 2021. You must also take additional precautions including rapid tests at the start of every shift and mandatory mask wearing.

On September 13, the PHO announced that the province is implementing a new order that makes vaccination against COVID-19 a condition of employment across all health authority facilities in BC. This new measure will come into effect on October 26, 2021. The details are not yet available.

As our practice includes some healthcare workers who are asking for exemptions from the vaccine, we are writing to clarify the medical reasons for which vaccine exemptions can be granted. These reasons have been set by the Ministry of Health and BC Centre for Disease Control.

You may be granted a permanent exemption if you have experienced the following medical contraindication:

- A history of an anaphylactic reaction (severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction) to components of **both** the mRNA (Pfizer-BioTech and Moderna) and viral vector (Astra Zeneca) vaccines.

You may be granted a temporary deferral for a COVID-19 vaccine if:

- You received anti SARS-CoV-2 antibodies or convalescent plasma for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19.
- You have been diagnosed with Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome.
- You have been diagnosed by a doctor with myocarditis or pericarditis (inflammation of the heart) following your first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine with no other cause identified.
- You have been diagnosed by a doctor with suspected hypersensitivity or non-anaphylactic allergy to COVID-19 vaccine components.
- You had a serious adverse event following your first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and are awaiting recommendation for further vaccination from the Medical Health Officer.

These are the only conditions for exemptions or deferrals for COVID-19 vaccination. Doctors are unable to write you a letter exempting you from receiving a COVID-19 vaccine unless you meet one of the above criteria.

We appreciate that you may have concerns about the new requirements for COVID-19 vaccination for healthcare workers. As your physicians, we are here to provide you with accurate immunization advice and discuss your concerns. We cannot, however, grant your request for a letter of medical exemption unless you meet the established medical criteria.

You can find more information about COVID-19 vaccine safety and other vaccine considerations on the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#).

Sincerely,
Your Family Doctors