

Vaccination FAQs
Updated March 19, 2021

Q: If I miss a call-out by the health authority, does that mean I won't be able to get a vaccine until my age group comes up?

A: No. When a group is deemed eligible, that eligibility is set to last throughout the rest of the pandemic. So for instance, if you were in the 90 year old age group and missed this week, you will be able to book for any of the weeks following. Your eligibility will not expire. This is the same for health providers. Once you are on the eligible list, you won't go off. Once the health authority has opened up the booking to you, they will ONLY pause it if they run out of vaccine (but you will still be eligible when that situation is rectified). We don't see any likelihood of future pauses but as we have all learned throughout the pandemic, things can change suddenly and without warning. We'll keep you as up-to-date as we can.

Q: Do I get to choose the vaccine I get?

A: No. The health authority and the vaccination site will administer whatever vaccine they have on hand. Some health authorities will notify you in advance. At the moment, hygienists are receiving mostly Pfizer, and a few have received Moderna. There are no guarantees, and the recommendation from public health is to take whichever one is offered.

Q: Do I have to get a vaccine?

A: We hope all dental hygienists will weigh the scientific evidence and choose to be vaccinated, but recognize each individual's right to make an informed decision for themselves. At the same time, as health professionals and health leaders, we expect all dental hygienists will support the orders and advice of public health officials at all times and not speak out against vaccination.

Q: I am retired/non-practicing – am I allowed to get a vaccine?

A: At this point, the health authorities are specifically focusing on oral health professionals who currently interact directly with patients. The definition of "direct" changes slightly per health authority, but in general, if you are someone who touches a patient, you qualify to receive the vaccine (this now includes reception for all health authorities).

Q: There are no spaces available!

A: We know. Each health authority releases new dates once or twice a week on a first-come, first-served basis. When the slots are booked you need to wait until new appointments are added. Our suggestion is to refresh the vaccination site every couple of days.

Q: What do I take to my appointment?

A: You will need ID (the usual driver's license, care card) as well as the name of your clinic and/or employer.

Q: I live in FHA and work in VCH and I'm confused!

A: We, and the health authorities, all recognize that the Lower Mainland has a lot of different possibilities for work and living and that communities are often a meld of different situations. You should try to book your appointment in the health authority you work in.

Q: I'm a student, do I qualify?

A: Yes, at the moment all health authorities are accepting students.

Q: I booked through VCH but a Community Living Appointment. Is that ok?

A: We encourage all dental hygienists to not book the Community Living appointments, we know that sometimes people don't notice until it's too late. You will still be vaccinated. VCH would like to be able to track the uptake in the Community Living group however, so it would be preferable to wait until an appointment is available for Allied/Community/Medical.

Q: What is 'retail staff'? Does that mean receptionist is not eligible?

A: Some of the health authorities have sent out 'batch' invitations which include other professions such as opticians. While the clinical staff and reception for the clinic would qualify, the individuals out front who 'sell frames' would not (retail). This term does not apply to oral health.