

August 24, 2021

Third Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine for Residents + Patient Ombudsman Report

Dear Residents, LTC Team Members and supportive partners,

Yesterday morning, a joint memo was released by the Ministry of Long-Term Care, Ministry of Health and Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility as a follow up to the August 17th announcement regarding third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine for residents in higher-risk congregate settings, including long-term care (LTC) homes and high-risk licensed retirement homes. You may access the full memo [here](#).

This announcement affects you as residents because your LTC home teams will be working with your local Public Health Units to distribute a third vaccine dose for you and your peers in the near future. As part of this process, your consent will be obtained again so you can make an informed decision.

A helpful companion document, which includes answers to some of the frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding the administration of third doses, was released with yesterday's memo. Access the full version [here](#).

The following are a few excerpts from the FAQ document for your review:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Question: Why do residents of LTC homes and higher-risk licensed retirement homes need a third dose?

Answer: Based on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and health experts, the province will begin offering third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to those at highest risk, providing them with an extra layer of protection against the Delta variant in light of evidence that shows the immune response in long-term care home residents wanes several months after receiving two COVID-19 vaccine doses. This includes LTC homes and higher-risk licensed retirement homes to ensure the safety of senior populations in higher-risk congregate settings.

Question: Can the flu vaccine be given at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine?

Answer: No, the flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine cannot be administered at the same time. If a person receives a COVID-19 vaccine, four weeks must lapse before a flu vaccine is administered. If a person receives a flu vaccine, two weeks must lapse before a

COVID-19 vaccine is administered. This is to ensure that any possible side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine can be monitored and assessed appropriately.

Question: After what interval of time following a second dose are residents of LTC homes and higher risk licensed retirement homes eligible for a third dose?

Answer: Residents of LTC homes and higher-risk licensed retirement homes will be eligible to receive their third dose at least five months after their second dose. There is no upper limit to the dosing interval for third doses.

Question: Are LTC home staff or essential caregivers that are seniors eligible for a third dose?

Answer: Only residents of LTC homes and higher-risk licensed retirement homes are eligible for a third dose at this time, unless the staff person, essential caregiver, or resident of a licensed retirement home (not deemed to be higher risk retirement home) is eligible as a result of being severely immunocompromised. The evidence does not currently support or warrant third doses in the general population.

If you would like to learn more about the Ministry of Health's updated recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccination for Special Populations you can access the document [here](#).

Ontario's Patient Ombudsman Releases a New Report

Patient Ombudsman has released a new Special Report entitled, Honouring Voices & Experiences: Reflections from Waves 2 and 3 of the Pandemic.

This report provides an overview of all COVID-19 complaints received by the office of the Patient Ombudsman with specific recommendations to our healthcare system for future pandemics or other public health crisis'.

Patient Ombudsman recommends:

1. A Right to Visit
2. Caregivers are Essential
3. Clearer communications in a crisis
4. Support for our Healthcare workforce post-pandemic

The findings that have emerged from this report align very clearly with the feedback OARC has been hearing from residents throughout the pandemic. Residents have been missing their loved ones during periods of separation and they continue to miss each other while cohorting in their homes. Residents have expressed frustration over the lack of communication, stating that they have largely been left in the dark, particularly in the first wave of the pandemic. Residents have also observed and expressed concern for their

team members working in their homes- concern for their health and well-being as well as their daily challenge of working short-handed as workloads to continue to grow.

OARC looks forward to future opportunities to collaborate with Patient Ombudsman as we envision a brighter future in our sector.

Access the full report [here](#).

Access the infographic [here](#).

Access the news release [here](#).

Keeping Residents Informed

The OARC team encourages LTC home leaders to print, post and share this information (and related linked materials) with all residents and to continue to work in partnership with Residents' Council leaders to keep residents in the loop of any ongoing practice changes in the home.

OARC's [Communications Tool](#) might assist you in formatting your messaging.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dee Lender". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dee Lender
Executive Director, OARC