



# COVID-19 Community Vaccine Hub

Protect your world. Get vaccinated.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – March 18, 2021

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### 1) BOOKING INFORMATION

#### How can I book my appointment?

Appointments can be made online or by phone. Please do not call your primary care provider to make an appointment.

To book an appointment **online**, please visit <https://sah.vertoengage.com/>. Individuals are urged to book an appointment online if they can, and support friends and family by helping them book appointments online.

If unable to book an appointment online, please book **by phone** by calling 705-541-2332 or toll free 1-800-469-2449. Phone lines are only open during set hours when booking is available. Check Algoma Public Health's [website](#) for updates on phone line hours.

Please do not visit the APH office or GFL Memorial Gardens box office to try and make an appointment in person. Appointments are only made online or over the phone via the information provided above.

#### What information do I need to book an appointment?

The following steps are required to book an appointment:

- 1) Identify which category you are eligible to be vaccinated under.
- 2) Choose a date and time for your appointment.
- 3) Fill out the following information: name, date of birth, gender, health card number, phone number, email address, and address. You will have 8 minutes to complete this step while holding your appointment time.

#### Can I come in without an appointment?

No. The Hub is operating by appointment only. The Hub is only allocated doses for booked appointments and cannot accommodate walk-ins.

#### How do I cancel my appointment?

When you book your appointment, you will receive an email with your booking details. This

email contains a link where you can cancel your appointment if necessary. Once that appointment is cancelled, it will then be available for others to book.

### **What do I do if I can't get an appointment?**

Blocks of appointments are based on vaccine supply and will be released on a weekly basis as they become available in Sault Ste. Marie. If you don't get an appointment – don't panic! As our community receives more vaccines, the Hub and other community-based locations will expand to provide additional dates in the near future. If you are eligible to be vaccinated this weekend, you will continue to be eligible through future dates.

### **When will more appointments be opened?**

We anticipate that vaccine shipments will start arriving weekly. We will continue to provide updates online each time new information becomes available.

### **When will my second appointment be?**

Ontario is following recommendations from Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) to extend the time interval of the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines up to 16 weeks for Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD. After extensive research and consideration, the committee has recommended that it's better to vaccinate as many people as possible with their first dose in the short term by extending the time between doses, citing real-world evidence of high vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 after the first dose. This will help us reduce the risk of hospitalizations and deaths at the population level and will have a great impact.

In accordance with this new recommendation, we will only be booking first appointments at

this time. We will reach out to individuals who have received their first dose when it is time to book the second appointment.

The following groups are exempt from this new recommendation and will continue to receive the second dose at the original two-week interval:

- Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges, and assisted living facilities
- Remote and isolated First Nation communities

Learn more about NACI's recommendation [here](#).

## **2) VENUE INFORMATION**

### **Where is the COVID-19 Community Vaccine Hub?**

The Hub is located at the GFL Memorial Gardens (269 Queen St. E., Sault Ste. Marie, ON) on the upper-level concourse. You can enter through the box office doors or accessible entrance and will then be directed to screening.

### **Is the COVID-19 Community Vaccine Hub accessible?**

Yes, the GFL Memorial Gardens arena is accessible. The accessible entrance with an elevator is located to the right of the main stairs, and the accessible exit is located to the right of the stair exit. Wheelchairs will be available for those who don't feel comfortable walking the concourse.

Staff will be located throughout the Hub to assist where needed. Caregivers and support animals are welcome at the Hub.

### **How do I get to the Hub?**

The GFL Memorial Gardens venue is conveniently located one block from the Sault Ste. Marie Transit terminal. For more information on Sault Ste. Marie Public Transit, click [here](#) or call 705-759-5834.

For registered Parabus clients, please call 705-942-1404 to book your ride.

## **3) AT YOUR APPOINTMENT**

### **How do I prepare for my appointment?**

Please bring your health card to your appointment, wear a t-shirt under your jacket, and always wear your mask. Do not enter the Hub until 5 minutes before your appointment. Do not take Tylenol™ or Advil™ before your appointment.

Once you are at the Hub, please have your health card ready at registration and share any relevant health history with the health professional that will be administering your vaccine.

### **How long will my appointment take?**

It will take approximately 30 minutes in total to get vaccinated. This includes undertaking a COVID-19 screening, registration, vaccination, waiting 15 minutes, and then checking out to receive your immunization receipt. Please do not enter the Hub until 5 minutes before your appointment.

### **Who will be administering vaccines?**

The Hub is a collaborative initiative between many local organizations and health providers. Vaccines will be administered by clinicians with experience administering vaccines in the community, including physicians, nurses,

midwives, paramedics, pharmacists, and medical students.

### **What vaccine will be administered at the Hub?**

At this time, we are administering the Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine at the Hub. For information on vaccines, please visit Algoma Public Health's [Vaccine Webpage](#).

### **What precautions are available in case of reaction or additional medical requirements?**

Serious side effects after receiving the vaccine are rare. However, the Hub has two designated first aid stations that are equipped to support any additional medical needs of attendees.

### **Will I be receiving proof of vaccination?**

Yes. Please do not leave the Hub without your receipt! You will receive a hard copy receipt when you check out of the Hub and if you provided an email address, you will also receive proof of vaccination via email.

## **4) HUB PLANNING**

### **How are appointments made available?**

The COVID-19 Community Vaccine Hub team has been hard at work ensuring that available vaccine doses are equitably distributed per Ministry guidelines to priority populations.

When Algoma Public Health receives a shipment of vaccine, they allocate the doses to clinics and priority populations throughout Algoma based on Ministry guidelines.

With guidance from APH, the Hub team then releases a block of appointments based on the allocations we are given. When you book an appointment, you must choose what category you're getting vaccinated in. Each category has a set number of appointments available to

ensure that all eligible groups have equitable opportunities to book.

There are also some appointments that are reserved for phone booking only. This ensures that appointments are not only booked by those who have the best access to internet or are most capable of using technology. This is why you may see appointments completely booked online while there are still some available by phone.

**Why does the online booking system say that there are no appointments available, yet I'm seeing social media posts that I should call to book?**

Some appointments are reserved for phone booking only. This is to ensure that everyone who is eligible to receive the vaccine is able to book – including those with poor internet access or who experience challenges when using online systems. As such, there may be phone appointments available even when there are no online appointments available.

**Why is the provincial booking system not being used?**

At this time, we are continuing to use a third-party booking system that supports the needs of local Algoma clinics and residents. As we learn more about the functionality of the provincial system, APH will work with local partners to transition to the province's booking system, where appropriate.

The COVID-19 Community Vaccine Hub team will keep you updated with any changes to booking information.

**Why is the Hub only open for a few days at a time?**

Hub dates are based on the number of doses available. Once we receive an allocation of doses, we determine the number of days the

Hub will be opened based on how many vaccinations can be administered each day. As more doses become available, there will be opportunity to expand dates.

## **5) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Can I get vaccinated if I'm pregnant, breastfeeding, or have an autoimmune condition?**

If you are eligible for COVID-19 immunization and have one of the conditions below, please speak with your treating health care provider BEFORE attending your immunization appointment.

- Pregnant
- Breastfeeding
- Have an autoimmune condition or are immunocompromised due to disease or treatment

**How can I learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine?**

For information on vaccines, please visit Algoma Public Health's [Vaccine Webpage](#) or Ontario's [COVID-19 Vaccine Webpage](#).

If you have any health-related issues that you would like to discuss, we recommend you speak to a primary care provider or health professional in advance of coming to the Hub.

**Where can I get the most up-to-date information on vaccines in Sault Ste. Marie?**

Algoma Public Health regularly publishes information on available vaccines, vaccine clinics, and eligibility. Please consult [www.algomapublichealth.com](http://www.algomapublichealth.com) and follow Algoma Public Health on social media (Facebook, Twitter) for the most up-to-date information.

**Where will mobile outreach units be located?**

Mobile outreach planning is underway. This initiative will be implemented in accordance with the Ministry of Health's phased vaccination approach once vaccine supply is more readily available.

**Is the Hub the only place I can get vaccinated?**

At this time, the Hub has been designated as the Mass Immunization Site for the City of Sault Ste. Marie that will be providing large scale capacity to safely and quickly immunize a large proportion of the population. Mobile teams are also planning outreach to priority populations. Once vaccine supply expands, there will be additional locations offering vaccination throughout the city, such as local pharmacies and clinics. Individuals are encouraged to access vaccination wherever is easiest once they are eligible.

**Who is involved with the Hub?**

The Hub is a collaborative initiative that is operating with oversight from Algoma Public Health and in accordance with Ministry of Health guidance. Many organizations are contributing the planning and implementing (with more to come). A special thanks to:

- Algoma District Medical Group
- Algoma Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic
- Algoma Public Health
- Algoma Residential Community Hospice (ARCH)
- City of Sault Ste. Marie; GFL Memorial Gardens
- Group Health Centre
- Midwives of Algoma
- Northern Ontario School of Medicine
- Sault Area Hospital
- Sault Ste. Marie Paramedic Services
- Superior Family Health Team