

Pharmacy vaccine appointments now open to 40+

Select pharmacies across Ontario ? including 11 in Aurora ? and primary care settings are now administering COVID-19 vaccines to residents born in or before 1981.

Effective this past Tuesday, April 20, Ontario lowered the age requirements on the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to individuals aged 40+, down from the previous age limit of 55 and up, while York Region public health has expanded eligibility requirements for vaccines outside of pharmacy settings to all residents born in 1961 or earlier.

?As we continue to fight COVID-19, we are doing everything possible to get as many vaccines into arms as quickly and safely as possible,? said Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, in a statement. ?We continue to be actively engaged with Health Canada on updated AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine safety. Last week, based on the review of available data from Europe and the United Kingdom, Health Canada announced it was not restricting the use of AstraZeneca vaccine in any specific populations at this time.

?By extending vaccination eligibility for AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine at pharmacies and primary care settings to individuals aged 40 and over, Ontario will be able to offer the protection of the vaccine to more Ontarians earlier than anticipated. With supply of AstraZeneca available at this time, the expansion of eligibility will also significantly increase access to vaccines in hotspot communities.

?The health and safety of Ontarians is always our top priority, and for that reason, only COVID-19 vaccines that Health Canada determines to be safe and effective are approved for use in Ontario. All COVID-19 vaccines available in Ontario have been shown to prevent serious illness, hospitalization and death. Adverse reactions are extremely rare. We strongly recommend that everyone book their appointment as soon as they are eligible.?

As of Saturday, York Region Public Health has administered 42,646 vaccine doses to residents 80 years of age and older, which translates into 87 per cent of the population in this age bracket. For residents between the ages of 75 and 79, 28,846 doses had been administered to 84.8 per cent of the population. 76.4 per cent of residents aged 70 to 74 have received their first doses (40,481 doses), 65.5 per cent of residents between the ages of 65 and 69 (41,948), 44 per cent of residents between 60 and 64 (34,750), 28.6 per cent of residents aged 55 ? 59 (26,571), 20.4 per cent of residents between the ages of 50 and 54 (18,805), and 18.4 per cent of residents between the ages of 45 and 49 (16,025).

Aurora pharmacies administering the AstraZeneca vaccines with appointment include:

Aurora IDA Pharmacy (25 William Graham Drive)

Care Drugs (24 Orchard Heights Blvd, Unit 103)

Family Drug Mart (9 Borealis Avenue, Unit 5)

Loblaw Pharmacy (15900 Bayview Avenue)

Pharmasave Aurora (126 Wellington Street West, Unit 105)

Shoppers Drug Mart (14729 Yonge Street)

Shoppers Drug Mart (446 Hollandview Trail)

Sobeys Pharmacy (15500 Bayview Avenue)

Wal-Mart Pharmacy (135 First Commerce Drive)

Wellington Pharmacy (300 Wellington Street East, Unit 2)

Wellness Clinical Pharmacy (15450 Yonge Street, Unit 2)

For a complete list of participating pharmacies, including how to book an appointment at each location, visit covid-19.ontario.ca/vaccine-locations and select Aurora from the drop-down menu.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter