

## COVID-19 VACCINES FAQs

### **NEW - Patients are asking me about eligibility for vaccines. What are the quick resources for clinical guidance?**

All members must consult the comprehensive [Public Health Clinical Practice Guidelines for Immunizers and Health Care Providers](#). This is the standard of care CPSM expects members to follow. This document must be consulted regularly as it will be updated very frequently as new clinical evidence emerges, guidelines change, and clinical eligibility evolves. Information contained in this document includes clinical guidance on:

- Pregnant &/or Breastfeeding Patients
- Patients who are immunosuppressed &/or have an autoimmune condition
- People who should NOT be immunized and require further consultation
- Guidance for use of the viral vector vaccine

Even if you are not administering the vaccines, you will likely be providing medical advice on vaccines and therefore it is important that you review this information.

Other helpful information for health care professionals on vaccines is located on [Manitoba COVID-19 Vaccine site](#).

### **I want to vaccinate patients in my clinic. Are there any special CPSM considerations?**

The [Code of Ethics and Professionalism](#) is always a good starting point as it articulates the ethical and professional commitments and responsibilities of the medical profession. In addition to the virtues of compassion, honesty, humility, integrity, and prudence the Code of Ethics and Professionalism contains the following:

- Promote the well-being of communities and populations by striving to improve health outcomes and access to care, reduce health inequities and disparities in care, and promote social accountability.
- 39. Support the profession's responsibility to act in matters relating to public and population health, health education, environmental determinants of health, legislation affecting public and population health, and judicial testimony.

- 40. Support the profession's responsibility to promote equitable access to health care resources and to promote resource stewardship.

The expectation is that as physicians we hold a unique position of trust with the public, especially during this pandemic. Family physicians (and perhaps some specialists) practicing in the community must exhibit the highest standards of practice, care, ethics, and professionalism to administer this vaccine equitably, quickly, and in accordance with Public Health direction, including the reporting requirements.

### As a community doctor do I have to administer vaccines?

No, but consider it a privilege to be able to assist in one of the largest challenges to health care and society since the Second World War.

Think about your relationships with your patients, your duty to provide medical care during the pandemic, and the health system's plans that exist in your community. Winnipeg is very different from a remote or rural community where Public Health or the RHA might be directly involved. Your practice, location, and other factors may mean that you are not provided with vaccines by Public Health.

### Are there special expectations for administering the vaccine in the community?

COVID-19 has made many demands on all members, but particularly those working with COVID-19 patients in hospitals, especially ICUs. The vaccine roll-out will make many demands on members practicing in the community including additional hours, reporting, and patient demands. Here are some general expectations to follow to assist the systematic and quick rollout of the vaccines in the province:

- Administer vaccines in a quick and efficient manner – Build capacity where possible to assist in vaccinating the public quickly.
- Follow the provincial guidelines for eligibility – don't vaccinate friends and family who are outside the designated age bands.
- Adhere to the [program requirements](#) for administering vaccines, including reporting requirements. The reporting requirements **must** be adhered to strictly to ensure inventory management and patient safety by identifying first and second doses of which vaccine.
- Follow the provincial guidelines for eligibility on age (or other criteria such as First Nations members) and the [Clinical Practice Guidelines](#) – even though you have patients with multiple significant risk factors, don't make your own clinical judgment.

- Use your clinical judgment to advise patients on the risks and benefits of immunization given their individual medical conditions
- Follow the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Health Care Professionals](#) and the [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinical Practice Guideline for use in Special Populations](#) issued by Public Health.
- Consider how to avoid wasting doses, including having a stand-by list of patients to offer vaccination on very short notice or other acceptable means at the discretion of the member which can be justified to CPSM

### **Some patients have expressed vaccine hesitancy. What should I tell them?**

The current evidence indicates that the COVID-19 vaccines offered in Manitoba are safe and offer a high degree of protection. Public Health has provided [clinical guidelines for special populations](#) with references to clinical studies and positions by clinical societies.

We must not use our medical credentials and reputation when making comments or providing advice relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, without scientific evidence, that may be interpreted as contrary to public health recommendations, the law, codes of ethics and professionalism, or regulatory standards and expectations; or pose a potential risk to personal and public safety.

As a member of the medical profession you must follow evidence-informed scientific information in providing medical care. Members must provide good medical care which includes:

“sufficient communication with the patient or his or her representative about the patient’s condition and the nature of the treatment and an explanation of the evidence-based conventional treatment options, including the material risks, benefits, and efficacy of the options in order to enable informed decision-making by the patient.” CPSM Standards of Practice Regulation

The Code of Ethics and Professionalism states, “6. Recommend evidence-informed treatment options...”

### **Even after I explain all that, my patient will not get the vaccine. Any direction?**

Respect the individual’s decision on their medical care. The patient is an active participant in their own care and can make such decisions if they have the capacity. You may not terminate the patient relationship due to their failure to vaccinate.