

Message regarding the AstraZeneca vaccine

May 12, 2021

INFORMATION FOR YOUR PRACTICE

The following message can be used/adapted by your practice to update patients on the pause of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Our thanks to the Bruyère Academic Family Health Team for inspiring this content.

Dear Patients,

Following the direction of the province (May 11), Ontario is immediately pausing administration of the first dose of the AZ vaccine.

For those who received their first dose of the AZ vaccine, we understand that there are many questions. Here is what we know now and are working to confirm for you.

Why was this change made now?

There are several reasons for this change:

- The rates of rare blood clots with this vaccine are rising – the province quoted a 1:60,000 chance.
- We are starting to see falling rates of COVID-19 infection in the province.
- There are increasing supplies of other vaccines coming into Ontario.

Should I have waited for a different vaccine?

If you have already been vaccinated, you did the right thing by protecting yourself and others around you. Having a first dose provides significant protection against serious illness and death should you become infected with COVID-19.

If you received the AZ vaccine within the past 28 days, the chances of serious side effects remain very small – but you should know the signs, as these rare blood clots can be treated if addressed early. Please reach out to our office or seek emergency care if you have the warning symptoms. *[For a quick summary of symptoms, see graphics here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Zvt1ui-FAQ2UrJZp5ABu3rST8tEaW5F>]*

What about the second doses?

What this pause means for second doses is not clear at this moment. There is a more predictable supply of other vaccines coming and Canada should have information on [mixing and matching different vaccine brands](#) in the next 1 or 2 weeks based on a large study being conducted in the United Kingdom.

Where can I get updates?

We will update you as soon as we have information. You can also check the provincial and our local public health unit website as well. Ontario's central vaccine management system has a record of when and where you were vaccinated and with which vaccine -- so no one will be left behind with a second dose.

Please remember – our office is open to you, by phone, by video or in person to answer any vaccination questions. We are here to help keep you safe and get through this pandemic together.

Best,