

Answering Your Questions about COVID-19

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Question 1: What is the difference between Step 2 and Step 3?

To see a full list of the differences between the stages of the Roadmap to Reopen, click [here](#). If you scroll down on that page, you can see a variety of services in alphabetical order, and the limits on them in each stage. You can look for the services that are important to you and see how they will gradually reopen.

For example, under “cinemas”, we can see that Step 2 doesn’t allow indoor seating, but you can watch movies outdoors with a capacity limit at 25% and other restrictions. However, in Step 3, indoor seating can open at a maximum capacity of 50% of the room or 1,000 people (whichever is less), and outdoor movie viewings are allowed to have more people. For unseated outdoor events, the maximum capacity is 75% or 5,000 people (whichever is less), and for outdoor events with fixed seating, the maximum capacity is 75% or 15,000 people (whichever is less). There are other restrictions too that are more specific, but this site is a great place to see the big picture.

Source:

1. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario>

Question 2: When can we stop wearing masks?

On Friday June 25, the Public Health Agency of Canada released a one-page document with guidelines on what you can safely do if you are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, or fully vaccinated, including when you don’t need to wear masks. Click [here](#) to read our paraphrased version of this update and click [here](#) to see the original document.

Sources:

1. https://www.nydp.ca/uploads/1/5/1/7/15170544/website_memo_june_29.pdf

2. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/awareness-resources/vaccinated-against-covid-19-public-health-measures/vaccinated-against-covid-19-public-health-measures.pdf>

Question 3: My sister won’t get the vaccine. Can I still see her?

Yes, you can! Please see [this one-page document](#) for information on safe ways to gather with unvaccinated people according to the Public Health Agency of Canada. What you can do

together also depends on whether you are partially or fully vaccinated, and whether you and your sister are outdoors or indoors.

Source:

1. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/awareness-resources/vaccinated-against-covid-19-public-health-measures/vaccinated-against-covid-19-public-health-measures.pdf>

Question 4: I am hearing about boosters. When will we get them?

The short answer is that booster shots are still in development by the vaccine manufacturers and aren't yet approved for distribution in Canada. We will get them as soon as they are evaluated and approved by Health Canada.

For context, a vaccine is approved for use in Canada only after Health Canada examines all of the necessary evidence and determines that it is safe, protective, and of high quality. Then, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) reviews evidence about the best ways to use the vaccine and makes recommendations to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). If the PHAC approves of the NACI's recommendations, those recommendations are made available to healthcare providers across Canada.

NACI's most current update says:

“There is currently no evidence on the need for booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine after the vaccine series is complete. Given the emergence of VOC against which vaccine effectiveness may be decreased, additional vaccine doses may be necessary. NACI will continue to monitor the evidence and update recommendations as needed.” ([page 24](#)).

However, Moderna and Pfizer representatives are open about their companies' booster shots. Last week, the co-founder of Moderna said a regular booster shot will “almost certainly” be needed to increase protection against COVID-19. Moderna began developing a booster shot in February 2021. In May, Moderna announced that early clinical trials show effectiveness against the Beta and Gamma variants, first found in South Africa and Brazil, respectively.

Also last week, Pfizer and German partner BioNTech said that within a few weeks, they will ask U.S. and European regulators to authorize a booster dose due to an increased risk of infection to COVID-19 six months after vaccination. In a statement on Friday, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada said that the health regulator had “not received a submission from Pfizer for the approval of a COVID-19 booster shot.”

Sources:

1. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/vaccine-safety-poster.html>

2. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html#t2>

3. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/development-approval-infographic.html>
4. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines-en.pdf>
5. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/moderna-co-founder-says-covid-19-booster-shots-will-almost-certainly-be-needed-1.5501545>
6. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/pfizer-biontech-covid19-booster-data-experts-1.6098910>

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If you think you may be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, take the self-assessment at www.ontario.ca/coronavirus. Follow all directions from your medical provider or your local health unit at the following phone numbers:

Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000

Toronto Public Health: 416-338-7600

Peel Public Health: 905-799-7700

Durham Region Health Department: 905-668-7711

York Region Public Health: 1-877-464-9675