

## Alberta COVID-19 Pharmacy Immunization Program (ACPIP)—all community pharmacies

### AstraZeneca vaccine

As announced on March 4, Albertans aged 50 to 64 will be able to book appointments starting March 10 to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine. At this time, the AstraZeneca vaccine will only be administered by Alberta Health Services.

If your patients call your pharmacy to book an appointment for the AstraZeneca vaccine, please direct them to book the appointment online through Alberta Health Services or by calling HealthLink 811.

### Storage requirements for COVID-19 vaccines

We have been receiving questions surrounding the refrigerator requirements as pharmacies are taking steps to ensure their readiness for ACP/IP participation.

To minimize the chance of vaccine wastage due to temperature excursions, Alberta Health is recommending as best practice to all participating pharmacies to use laboratory grade refrigerators.

However, if a laboratory grade refrigerator is not accessible for the participating pharmacy, a domestic fridge can be used in its place, under the condition that ALL of the following are met:

- **Must** have a temperature logging system and alarm for temperature excursion.
- Refrigerator and freezer units **must** be separated and have separate external doors for the freezer and fridge.
- Manual and cyclic defrost refrigerators **should not be used** due to the significant temperature variations and the risk of vaccines freezing.
- Vaccines should **only** be stored in certain areas of the refrigerator, depending on the temperature zone. Vaccines should be stored in the middle of the compartment away from the coils, walls, floor and cold-air vent.
- Vaccines should **never** be stored in the bins or doors.
- A successful ACP assessment has been done within the past 12 months.
- Precautions must be taken, as temperatures may fluctuate in different compartments of the refrigerator.

In order to ensure a potent and viable COVID-19 vaccine to Albertans, pharmacies **must** ensure they are using the best and most ideal storage and handling requirements as recommended by Alberta Health.

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

**780-498-8370** (Edmonton and area)

**403-294-4041** (Calgary and area)

**1-800-361-9632** (toll free)

**FAX 780-498-8406** (Edmonton and area)

**FAX 1-877-305-9911** (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

Visit [ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php](https://ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php)

