

COVID-19 vaccinations now open in Peel to everyone 18+

By Brock Weir

All Peel Region residents aged 18+ are now eligible to book their COVID-19 vaccine appointment.

The decision to ramp up vaccination efforts was announced by Dr. Lawrence Loh, Peel's Medical Officer of Health, on Wednesday afternoon.

As of 8 a.m. on May 6, 11 mass vaccination clinics across the Region will be equipped to welcome residents with pre-booked appointments and the Region says this expansion of eligibility will impact 50,000 residents who do not live in designated hotspots.

"Now is the time for every adult Peel resident to access vaccine," said Dr. Loh. "We are thrilled to have vaccine supply to enhance our mass vaccination efforts and offer protection to everyone over 18 who lives in Peel Region. This is a very important step in our fight against COVID-19, as we work towards vaccinating our community as quickly as possible."

Added Nancy Polsinelli, Commissioner of Health Services: "Opening eligibility to all 18+ Peel residents allows us to expand our overall Mass Vaccination Plan that includes a variety of options for vaccination at fixed clinics, primary care providers, hospital clinics, pharmacies and mobile community outreach clinics. We are continuing to work closely with the province to ensure additional vaccine supply for Peel. All residents who are eligible are urged to book their appointment and get vaccinated as soon as possible - the best vaccine is the first one that is available to you."

Residents of Peel who are between the ages of 18 and 49 but do not live in a provincially-identified hot spot must book an appointment using Peel's booking system at peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/bookappointment. Residents living in hot spots should continue to use the Province's booking system at covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine or by calling 1-833-943-3900.

Peel's eligibility expansion came less than a week after the Province revised its own eligibility requirements.

Last Thursday, the Province announced all Ontarians 18+ would be eligible to book their vaccinations by May 24.

The acceleration of the vaccine rollout is due to an expected increase in vaccine supply from the Federal Government.

By the start of this month, it was expected that 800,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine would begin arriving per week, ramping up to 940,000 doses per week by the end of May.

"Ontario's vaccine rollout is continuing to focus on getting vaccines to those most at risk," said Health Minister Christine Elliott. "With a stable and reliable supply of vaccines on the way, we will continue expanding access to the vaccine in communities across the Province, especially those areas that continue to be hit hardest by COVID-19. The best vaccine remains the first one you're offered and I strongly encourage everyone to sign up as soon as it is their turn."

During the weeks of May 3 and May 10, 50 per cent of the vaccines are expected to be designated for hot spots, with an emphasis on mobile teams, pop-up clinics, mass immunization clinics, hospitals, primary care and pharmacies.

Additionally, Peel Public Health has expanded the mass vaccination clinic at the Caledon East Community Complex to 650 appointments per day.