

Health PEI Health Care Workers Frequently Asked Questions

VACCINATION

Updated January 9, 2022

1. Q: I am a HCW and I received my 2nd dose of the COVID-19 vaccine +6 months ago, am I eligible for the booster dose (3rd)?

A: HCWs who received their 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccine greater than 6 months ago are eligible.

2. Q: I am a HCW and have not been vaccinated. Will I be tested for COVID-19?

A: As of September 24, 2021, per direction from the Chief Public Health Office (CPHO), all HCWs who have only received a first dose of vaccine, a second dose of vaccine before 14 days post-administration, or are unvaccinated, must be screened with the provided COVID-19 antigen test. As per the Health PEI Covid-19 Immunization and Management Policy, this direction includes HCWs who do not have direct interaction with patients, residents or clients.

Note: As per the HPEI Covid-19 Immunization and Management Policy - New hire HCWs must provide a mandatory vaccination record upon initial hire and are not eligible for participation in the rapid testing protocol, unless approved for a valid medical exemption. Proof of Immunization is collected with all other new hire documentation and provided to the Wellness and Safety OHS LPN. Returning staff to HPEI would be considered New Hires and are required to adhere to the policy.

3. Q: I am a HCW and have not been vaccinated; I will be tested for COVID-19. How do I administer the test?

A: Guidance for administering antigen tests is available on the [Staff Resource Centre](#). Note: HCWs must wait the full 15 minutes to determine the test result.

4. Q: I am a HCW and have not been vaccinated. How frequently will I be tested for COVID-19?

A: All HCW's in HPEI facilities who have only received a first dose of vaccine, or are unvaccinated, will be tested up to a maximum of 3 times per week depending on work schedule.

i. Frequency of antigen testing will be no greater than 48 hours before the start of a shift and must be completed prior to the start of a shift at every required interval.

ii. Staff who work full time will be expected to space out the three required tests to the best of their ability throughout the week.

iii. Work Schedule Examples

iv. HCW works full time each week: Tests will be spaced out up to a maximum of 3 per week.

v. HCW works 1 shift per week: 1 test completed per shift.

vi. HCW works 2 consecutive shifts weekly: Test once.

HCW works 3 consecutive shifts weekly: Test two times, no greater than 48 hours before the start of a shift.

5. Q: I am a HCW, have not been vaccinated and am required to participate in antigen testing. Will my antigen tests have to be witnessed and can I take test kits home to complete?

A: Appropriate safety precautions, in accordance with the manufacturer's label, must be taken for all antigen tests to ensure the safety of the individual being tested as well as the individual witnessing the specimen collection. Antigen testing is conducted through a self-testing method; the specimen collection must be overseen and witnessed by a designated person at the facility in order to be compliant. Examples of witnesses can be an administrator, supervisor, clinical lead or staff member identified for the role. The test kit must be completed at the work site and be witnessed, therefore, kits cannot be taken home.

6. Q: I am a HCW and I am experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Should I use an on site antigen test?

A: On site antigen testing is NOT for anyone who has any symptoms of COVID-19. Anyone with symptoms should be tested at a testing location.

7. Q: I am a HCW and am required to participate in regular COVID-19 antigen testing. What happens if I have a positive result?

A: If a HCW's antigen test result is positive (considered a presumptive positive), they are to notify their supervisor and are to be tested at a COVID-19 testing site. Any HCW with a positive antigen test result is to self-identify at the testing facility. They must self-isolate immediately until receiving a negative test (PCR) result.

8. Q: I am a HCW employed with HPEI, have not been fully vaccinated, and require regular COVID-19 testing in compliance with the CPHO Order. Will I be compensated for the time required to complete the antigen testing?

A: As with previous CPHO directives requiring testing, the testing was conducted off site at COVID-19 clinics and the Employer provided no additional compensation, as this was not an Employer requirement, but adherence to a public health order.

i. The Employer will be moving forward with the same approach; however, testing will no longer be off-site, but on-site at HPEI facilities. There will be no additional compensation for prior testing.

9. Q: I am a HCW, have not been fully vaccinated, and am refusing regular COVID-19 testing in compliance with the CPHO Order. Will I be compensated or re-assigned?

A: All unvaccinated HCWs in HPEI facilities must be screened with a COVID-19 antigen test as per CPHO Order effective Sept. 24, 2021. Unvaccinated HCWs who refuse to participate in antigen testing will be placed on an unapproved leave, which will be unpaid, and will not be re-assigned.

In addition, effective December 13, 2021, Health PEI employees who are not in compliance with the COVID-19 Immunization and Management Policy, and who do not have an approved medical or other accommodation for not being in compliance with the Policy, will be taken by the Employer to have resigned their position effective immediately.

10. Q: I am a HCW and have not been fully vaccinated due to a medical exemption. Am I still required to participate in mandatory antigen testing?

A: All unvaccinated HCW's in HPEI facilities, regardless of exemption status, must participate in COVID-19 antigen testing in keeping with the CPHO Order. Medical contraindication to the COVID-19 vaccine is approved only by CPHO, issued by the most responsible health care provider and filed in their employment file. See Application for Medical Exemption Form in the COVID-19 Immunization and Management Policy.

11. Q: I am a HCW who has been fully vaccinated, however, my manager/supervisor have received a report stating an incorrect vaccination status. Where and how do I provide my correct vaccination record?

A: HCWs who have been fully immunized (2 doses + 14 days) are able to provide proof of vaccination from the Government of Prince Edward Island Dept. of Health and Wellness website immunization record: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/COVID-19-immunization-record>. If vaccinated out of province, proof of immunization is to be submitted from their respective province's record-keeping process.

- i. The immunization record is to be provided to the site Employee Health Nurse or Wellness and Safety Occupational Health and Safety LPN (confidential email: healthpeiohs@ihis.org).
- ii. New hire HCWs must provide a mandatory vaccination record upon initial hire and are not eligible for participation in the rapid testing protocol, unless approved for a valid medical exemption.

12. Q: I am a HCW and I have privacy concerns regarding the disclosure of vaccination status?

A: The collection and use of staff vaccine information falls under the rules for personal information in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The *Health Information Act*, expressly states that it does not apply to information collected pursuant to the *Public Health Act*, which includes immunization information.

- i. Health PEI, as a public body, is permitted under the *FOIPP Act* to collect, use and disclose personal information for the purposes of managing personnel and also other purposes

related to public safety. Therefore, disclosure of COVID-19 vaccination status for the purposes of job duties (ie, staff scheduling and monitoring staff compliance with the policy) does not pose a privacy concern.