

# Janssen Vaccine Update from York Region Public Health to Health Care Providers

December 10, 2021

Dear York Region Health Care Provider,

## York Region Public Health has limited supply of the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine available for clients

If you have a patient (over the age of 18) who would like to receive the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, please direct them to call Access York at 1-877-464-9675 to be added to a waitlist of individuals. Planning is underway for a dedicated Janssen COVID-19 clinic and these clients who are added to the waitlist will be notified with further details about the clinic.

Please review the following information, as well as the [Ministry of Health Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet](#), with patients interested in receiving the Janssen vaccine.

## Every effort should be made to immunize with an mRNA vaccine and the Janssen vaccine should only be used when an mRNA vaccine is declined and after informed consent

Ontario recommends that a booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should be given at least 6 months after the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. Clinical trials showed that beginning 2 weeks after the single dose, the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine lowered the chance of getting sick from COVID-19 by 67% and of getting seriously ill by 77%. This protection is somewhat lower than with an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. Because of lower protection and some safety concerns, mRNA vaccines are recommended by National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

## Who can and cannot receive the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine at this time?

- The Janssen vaccine is authorized for use in people who are 18 years of age and older
- The Janssen vaccine should not be used in individuals younger than 18

## Individuals with the following conditions should not receive the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine:

- A history of blood clots with low platelets (i.e., major venous and/or arterial thrombosis with thrombocytopenia) following any vaccine
  - If patient had blood clots with low platelets after a previous viral vector vaccine (AstraZeneca or Janssen), patient should not receive the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine
- Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) or vaccine induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT) following the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine
- A history of capillary leak syndrome (CLS)
- A history of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) with thrombocytopenia

## PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675

TTY 1-866-512-6228

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- A history of heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)
- Actively receiving monoclonal antibody therapy OR convalescent plasma therapy for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19
  - Vaccine should not be administered while actively receiving therapy
- Individuals with severe allergic reaction (including anaphylaxis) to a component/ingredient of the Janssen vaccine should discuss their vaccine choices with a health care provider before receiving the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine
- Individuals who have experienced serious adverse event following COVID-19 immunization should discuss their vaccine choices with a health care provider before receiving the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine

**Some very rare reactions that have been found to occur from taking a viral vector vaccine are:**

- Vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT), also called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS)
  - VITT is a serious condition involving thrombosis (blood clots) and thrombocytopenia (low platelets; platelets are a part of the blood used for clotting). VITT can cause blood clots to develop in the brain, abdomen, legs and other parts of the body. VITT symptoms can occur within 4 weeks, and sometimes up to 6 weeks, after vaccination.
  - VITT has been reported to occur in about 1 in 300,000 people who receive a Janssen vaccine. VITT can result in death.
  - Because of the risk of VITT, mRNA vaccines are preferred
- Capillary leak syndrome (CLS)
  - Capillary leak syndrome is a serious and sometimes fatal condition that causes fluid to leak from small blood vessels causing rapid swelling of the arms and legs, sudden weight gain, and low blood pressures resulting in feeling faint
  - Those who have previously had capillary leak syndrome appear to be at increased risk following vaccination with a viral vector vaccine, such as Janssen
- Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS)
  - GBS is a potentially serious neurologic disorder that results in numbness and weakness in the arms, legs, face, chest or other muscles, causing paralysis in severe cases. It can occur within several weeks after vaccination with the Janssen vaccine.
  - Most people fully recover from GBS but some have remaining symptoms and fatal cases can occur
- Immune thrombocytopenia (ITP)
  - ITP results in low platelets (a part of the blood used for clotting) that can cause easy or excessive bruising or bleeding. It can occur within 4 weeks of vaccination and cases can be fatal.
  - Some of the cases of ITP after vaccination have occurred in people with a previous problem of low platelets
- Venous thromboembolism (VTE)
  - VTE causes blood clots in the deep veins such as in the legs, arms or groin that can travel to the lungs causing serious illness. Symptoms include shortness of breath and chest pain.
  - Some people are more prone to VTE. Patient should discuss your risks with their health care provider.

**Please speak to your patients who would like to receive the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine about the risks and benefits. If after informed consent they wish to receive the Janssen vaccine, please direct them to call Access York at 1-877-464-9675 for more information on how to access the Janssen vaccine in York Region.**

### **Reporting Adverse Events**

If a patient experiences a side effect following immunization, please complete the [Adverse Events Following Immunization \(AEFI\) Form](#) and send it to York Region Public Health via fax at 905-898-5213, or call our Nurses Line at 1-877-464-9675, ext. 73452.

### **Contact York Region Public Health**

For more information, call our dedicated health care professional line at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday) or visit [york.ca/healthprofessionals](http://york.ca/healthprofessionals)

Sincerely,

York Region Public Health