

Grand River Hospital COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Questions & Answers

Why is GRH mandating vaccination for all of its staff, physicians, students, volunteers and vendors? Why has this changed?

Grand River Hospital (GRH) continues to prioritize the health and safety of our team, which includes all staff, physicians, students and volunteers. We are very grateful to those who have already been fully vaccinated to protect our patients, colleagues, family and friends. GRH needs to ensure that we have taken every safety measure to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, particularly with the increased transmission of the Delta variant in our community. The impact of an outbreak on our ability to care for patients is an on-going concern, particularly with the degree of transmissibility of the Delta Variant. Our vaccination policy is another safety measure that will help us mitigate this risk. The move to mandatory vaccines for staff is becoming the standardized practice not only in health care but across many other sectors.

Who does the policy impact?

GRH's mandatory vaccine policy applies to all employees, physicians, students, volunteers and contractors working with and at GRH, and is aligned with our community partners at St. Mary's General Hospital, Cambridge Memorial Hospital, Guelph General Hospital, North Wellington and Groves hospitals, as well as Homewood Health. The health and safety of GRH's staff, patients and our broader community remain our top priority and throughout the pandemic.

When does this come into effect?

New staff hired as of September 7th must be fully vaccinated before their first day of employment at GRH. Existing GRH's staff, physicians, students, volunteers and contractors will have until October 12th to meet the mandated requirement for their second dose of vaccination. Given the waiting time required between first and second doses for the COVID vaccine, to meet the deadline of October 12th, anyone currently unvaccinated should make arrangements to receive their first dose before September 14th.

What is the interim plan between September 7th and October 12th for regular testing for staff that are unvaccinated?

As of September 7th, team members who are unvaccinated and working onsite at GRH will be required to undergo twice-weekly (Tuesday's and Friday's) home-based antigen testing and provide a negative COVID-19 result. All new staff hired from September 7th on will be required to be fully vaccinated before their first day of work.

Will staff who are unvaccinated and working from home still need to be tested regularly if they are not coming onsite to GRH?

Yes. All team members who remain unvaccinated between September 7th and October 12th, will need to demonstrate a negative test result prior to coming on site to the hospital. They must fully comply with the vaccination policy and receive their second dose of the vaccine by October 12th regardless if they are working at home or on-site on a full-time, part-time or casual basis. Every team member at GRH may be called upon to come on-site should we need all-hands-on-deck in a crisis or emergency situation. In order to ensure that we have the resources available at a moment's notice, full vaccination for all staff is mandatory (with the exception of those with a medical exemption on file with Occupational Health and Safety).

If I have a medical or any legislated exemption, what will happen?

For those very few team members who qualify for any protected exemption such as a medical exemption, they will be required to undergo twice-weekly home-based antigen testing and be required to provide negative COVID-19 results throughout the duration of their employment or during such time as these safety measures are in place.

Does the vaccination policy apply to Care Partners, patients and visitors?

No, not at this time. We are not currently requiring these individuals to be vaccinated. However, we will adjust our policies as required for the safety and wellbeing of all.

Does the vaccination policy apply to students?

Yes, this policy applies to students working with our team at GRH. Their respective educational institutions will manage compliance with their students and follow our attestation process.

Does the vaccination policy apply to anyone working with the hospital that will be coming onsite? Who tracks this?

Yes. All outside contractors who are not employed by GRH and who will be working on-site must be fully vaccinated to conduct business at the hospital as of October 12.

Moving forward, all GRH vendor contracts will contain the requirement that anyone coming on-site must be fully vaccinated. All vendors must comply with a new attestation process. We are in the process of working with our vendors to share the expectations outlined in our vaccination policy. Each third-party employer will manage compliance with their own staff and attest that their staff are in compliance.

Will vaccinations be available on-site at GRH?

Vaccinations are readily available within the community, including walk-ins.

After I have my second dose, will I need to wait the two weeks for full efficacy before working on-site October 12 on?

No. As long as you submit proof that your second vaccination occurred October 12th or earlier, you will be permitted on-site. However, you will need to continue your rapid antigen testing until you are deemed fully vaccinated (approximately 14 days after your second dose).

What happens if I don't receive my second dose before October 12th?

Anyone who is not fully vaccinated (receiving both COVID vaccine doses) before October 12th will also be placed on a leave of absence.

What happens if I receive my second dose of vaccination while I'm on my unpaid leave of absence?

Team members who have received their second dose of vaccination will be permitted to return to work and will be subject to rapid antigen testing until considered fully vaccinated.

What happens if I have not received my second dose of vaccination by November 9th?

Where team members have not submitted proof of being fully vaccinated (receiving both COVID vaccine doses) by November 9th the Hospital will review each situation and this may result in discipline up to and *including* termination of employment, impacting hospital privileges or the ability to continue volunteering at GRH.

How do I submit proof of a medical or other legislated exemption?

This documentation will be submitted to Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) at occupational.health@grhosp.on.ca.

The email must include the team members name, employee number and department along with their written medical documentation.

NOTE: Volunteers should identify their status accordingly.

What will this mean for staff who refuse to be vaccinated?

We understand and respect that vaccination is a personal choice. However, to be employed at GRH after October 12th, employees must be fully vaccinated as a condition of their employment. The following steps will be taken with staff who are unvaccinated:

- **Step 1:** Team members have until September 7th to submit their proof of their second dose of vaccination to Occupational Health and Safety. If you have misplaced your original, [you can download a digital copy on the Ontario government's website](#) and submit it to covid@grhosp.on.ca.
- **Step 2:** As of September 7, team members who are unvaccinated must complete a mandatory education session by September 14 and undergo twice-weekly (Tuesday's and Friday's) home-based antigen testing submitting their negative test results, before coming on-site to the hospital. Results must be submitted every Tuesday and Friday to Occupational Health and Safety via email at covidtesting@grhosp.on.ca. Staff must include a picture that clearly shows the negative response, the team members name and the date.
- **Step 3:** Staff, physicians and volunteers who remain unvaccinated, or who have not submitted proof of their vaccination or proof of exemption, must schedule a mandatory Occupational Health and Safety consultation by September 21. Team members will have the opportunity to ask questions and will be given further opportunities of support to assist the individual to make an informed decision about becoming vaccinated by the deadline of October 12th.
- **Step 4:** Team members who are not vaccinated by October 12th (without an existing protected legislated exemption, such as medical on file with Occupational Health and Safety) will be removed from the schedule and placed on an unpaid leave of absence.
- **Step 5:** Between October 12th and November 9th, 2021, further opportunities to make an informed decision will take place between the Hospital and the individual.
- **Step 6:** November 9th, failure to comply with the Hospital policy may result in discipline up to and *including* termination of employment, impacting hospital privileges or the ability to continue volunteering at GRH.

Who pays for the mandatory education session that unvaccinated staff will have to take?

You will be able to watch the video (approximately 15 minutes in length) provided for the mandatory education session during your scheduled shift. If there are any difficulties in being able to view the video at work, please contact your Manager to make the necessary arrangements for payment if you have no alternative but to view the video from home.

What happens if there is an outbreak?

Your vaccination status may be taken into consideration during an outbreak when we may need to cohort patients and staff to care for them. Your personal vaccination status is not communicated during this process.

If a team member has been medically exempted from receiving the vaccine, it will be reviewed on an individual basis to determine if an accommodation is appropriate during the outbreak.

Are there any updates from the Science Table in regards to any new provincial modelling data for the fall?

No. Unfortunately, at this time there are no updates to share. However, should the Science Table release any updated data, we will share these with team members.

With children returning to school in September, what will the procedure be for staff who have children or family members with COVID-19 symptoms?

If you or a family member within your household has symptoms or has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 or awaiting COVID-19 test results, please call Occupational Health and Safety at ext. 1919 before reporting to work. You must not attend work until cleared through Occupational Health and Safety.

What is the plan for on-site staff returning from leaves of absences after the September 7th deadline (when all staff must submit proof of vaccination)?

GRH is developing a process for anyone coming back who has not sent in their proof of vaccination. Each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate timelines to meet the requirements necessary to return to work (e.g. this would become a part of the Human Resources and disability management or return to work checklists).

Where do I pick up my rapid antigen point of care test kits, is there a cost to me, and how do I submit proof that I have taken the test?

Kits will be available for pick up at:

- **KW Campus, Room 9B9 (Occupational Health Conference Room) on;**
 - September 2, 3, 7, 8 from 9:00am to 3:30pm

- **Freeport Campus, VC3 (Occupational Health and Safety) on;**
 - September 2, 3, 7, 8 from 9:00am to 3:30pm

From Thursday September 9th onward, kits will be available at the KW campus in the Occupational Health Office (9th Floor, B Wing) from 7:30am to 3:30pm.

There is no cost for the test kits.

Results must be submitted every Tuesday and Friday to Occupational Health and Safety via email at covidtesting@grhosp.on.ca. Staff must include a picture that clearly shows the negative response, the team members name and the date.

All medical documentation that OHS collects is maintained in strict confidence.

What happens if I take the test and it shows as “positive”?

If you get a positive test result with the antigen test, you must not come to the hospital or your place of work. Contact the Occupational Health and Safety at ext. 1919 to arrange for confirmatory PCR testing at the COVID Assessment Centre.



What happens if I am symptomatic, do I still take the test?

No. If you have any symptoms do not take the antigen test and do not come into the hospital or your place of work. You must call Occupational Health and Safety at ext. 1919.