



| COVID-19 | Regina’s COVID-19 Mass Clinic/Testing Site Moving to Old Costco Building

Access to the COVID-19 vaccine mass clinic and drive-thru testing will be moving from Evraz Place to the old Costco building, directly east of the Victoria Square Mall on East Victoria Ave. Dates are as follows:

Drive-thru testing

Friday, Nov. 5 – Last day at Evraz Place for drive-thru testing

Saturday, Nov. 6 – Drive-thru testing opens at old Costco building (enter through E Star Light Street)

Vaccine Mass Clinic

Thursday, Nov. 11 – Last day at Evraz Place for COVID-19 vaccine mass clinic

Monday, Nov. 15 – COVID-19 vaccine mass clinic opens at old Costco building (enter through main entrance)

Note: For a list of walk-in clinics from Nov. 12-14 for both COVID-19 and flu vaccines during the move transition, please [visit the SHA website](#).

To view the new mass clinic hours, please visit [the SHA website](#).

Anyone being vaccinated or tested will be required to:

Bring a valid Saskatchewan Health Card for everyone being tested or vaccinated. If you do not have a Saskatchewan Health Card, please instead bring another form of identification like a Health Card from another province, drivers’ license or passport. To respect patient privacy and safety, we ask that families only bring people within their immediate family or family bubble.

Wear a mask during the patient registration process. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided for you.

The SHA is currently not providing testing for those individuals **who are asymptomatic** or require **proof of a negative** test. Individuals requiring a negative test result have several private options on the market that will provide a





rapid antigen test or a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for a fee. For a current list of locations and labs offering testing services, please visit the [Government of Saskatchewan's website](#).

The SHA would like to thank Regina Exhibition Association Limited (REAL) for their partnership and support, which has allowed thousands of individuals to be tested and vaccinated at Evraz Place throughout the pandemic.

| COVID-19 | COVID-19 Vaccination Available at Most Public Flu Clinics

Be prepared to be asked if you want your COVID-19 vaccination or a booster shot while receiving your flu shot at most Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) public health influenza vaccine clinics this fall.

“We want to make it more convenient for those eligible to receive their COVID-19 vaccination or booster at the same time,” noted Sharon Garratt, Vice President of Integrated Urban Health and Chief Nursing Officer for the Saskatchewan Health Authority. “With the additional pressure our health system is currently facing due to the surge in COVID-19, it is more efficient and safe to offer both vaccines at most public flu clinics.”

All Health Canada-approved COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time as other vaccines at separate injection sites; there is no longer a minimal interval required before or after COVID-19 vaccine administration. Individuals have the opportunity to be immunized against COVID-19 when they are eligible to receive other vaccines such as influenza and school-aged vaccines.

“It is so important for people to get the flu shot this year to prevent the health-care system from being overwhelmed by both COVID-19 surges and Influenza outbreaks,” notes Dr. Kevin Wasko, Physician Executive for Integrated Rural Health with the Saskatchewan Health Authority. “The best way to address the pressure on our health system is to prevent it by increasing flu and COVID-19 vaccination rates amongst all eligible residents.”



Visit www.4flu.ca for information on flu shots and where to find a public health clinic.

| COVID-19 | Return to ‘Normal’ depends on early detection, vaccination

With hospitals overburdened by the fourth wave of COVID-19, the Saskatchewan Health Authority’s head of emergency medicine is urging people to get tested at the first signs of the virus and, above all, get vaccinated.

“If people had vaccinations, or tested early, recognized their symptoms earlier and isolated themselves, we would have less spread and, therefore, less spread would mean fewer sick people and fewer severely sick people,” said Dr. James Stempien.



“It certainly would be better for the health-care system and better for the patients themselves,” he said.

According to Oct. 20 provincial data, 48.3 per cent of all people in hospital with COVID-19 had their first positive COVID-19 test on or after admission to hospital.

“The fact they aren’t being diagnosed until they come to hospital means they’ve actually been at home or been with other people while they’ve been positive with COVID,” said Stempien, adding that approximately 80 per cent of COVID-19 patients in intensive care are unvaccinated. “They’ve been contagious and unknowingly spreading their illness to their friends and family, which has an impact on the health-care system.”

Stempien said he’s seeing a common line of thinking among those who delay care.

“I think there’s a certain degree of denial in that people feel they’re not going to get sick or, even if they got COVID, they’re not going to get severely sick,” he said. “Even with people who are not anti-vaxxers, they’re just feeling that it can’t be them.”

Stempien recommends that anyone who suspects they’ve been exposed to COVID-19 speak with their family physician or call HealthLine 811 to discuss testing. Additional testing options are available on the [Government of Saskatchewan’s COVID-19 website](#).

“Any time a person has symptoms, it could potentially be COVID. Having a negative test doesn’t mean you did the wrong thing. It means you did the right thing, being careful for your family and being careful so that you don’t have to go into self-isolation.”

Stempien observes that, in the past, Saskatchewan people were known for pulling together in difficult times. It would benefit us, he said, if we honoured this tradition.

“That’s what self-testing’s about. That’s what vaccination is about. That’s what recognizing that you’re sick and staying home is about. It’s about protecting your neighbor and making sure the more vulnerable people in our population are protected.”

Protecting the health system is part of this philosophy.

“Our health-care workers are going flat-out. If we can help our health-care staff stay healthy both physically and mentally, if we could get our vaccination rate in Saskatchewan over 90 per cent, we’d be looking at a very different province. We’d be much closer to getting back to a normal life and a normal economy and just what people really want.”



Dr. James Stempien says vaccination and prompt testing are essential to keep ourselves and others safe.



COVID-19



*In their own
words...*



“Please do your part to stop this preventable virus. Practice masking and infection and prevention measures and, above all, get vaccinated.” Dr. Susan Shaw

saskatchewan.ca/COVID19

/ COVID-19 / Proof of Vaccination or Negative Test For Visitors

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is announcing that beginning November 8, 2021 Proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or negative COVID test will be required to enter all SHA acute care facilities, and Long Term Care (LTC) homes, including affiliates. This aligns with both the SHA Health Care Worker Proof of Vaccination policy and the provincial [Proof of Vaccination](#) contained in the Saskatchewan Public Health Order for non-essential businesses and events. Patients will not be required to provide proof of full vaccination to receive care or service.

The Ministry of Health will be directing personal care homes to align with this policy.

The SHA is committed to patient and family centred care, including safe family presence. Many safety enhancements have been put in place during the pandemic to promote and sustain safe family presence including masking, screening and point of care testing. All essential family/supports and visitors are to provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test. Without a proof of vaccination, essential family/supports and visitors to long term care homes (including Affiliates) and personal care homes may provide a negative PCR or a rapid antigen test, provided the test is performed in the last 72 hours by an approved third party provider. These services are user pay and a list of providers is available on the [Government of Saskatchewan website](#).

You will have several options for showing your proof of vaccination credentials.

- QR Code on your mobile phone (screenshot from [MySaskHealthRecord](#) or SK Vax Wallet app)
- QR code printed from [MySaskHealthRecord](#)
- COVID-19 vaccine certificate printed from [MySaskHealthRecord](#)



- Wallet cards received at time of immunization (Saskatchewan Health Authority or Indigenous Services Canada)
- Proof (electronic or in writing) issued by another province, territory or government.

For those who choose not to show proof of vaccination, a negative PCR, or rapid antigen test, performed in the past 72 hours by an approved provider must be shown. SHA will not cover the cost of testing. Information on where to obtain a test can be found at on the [Government of Saskatchewan website](#).

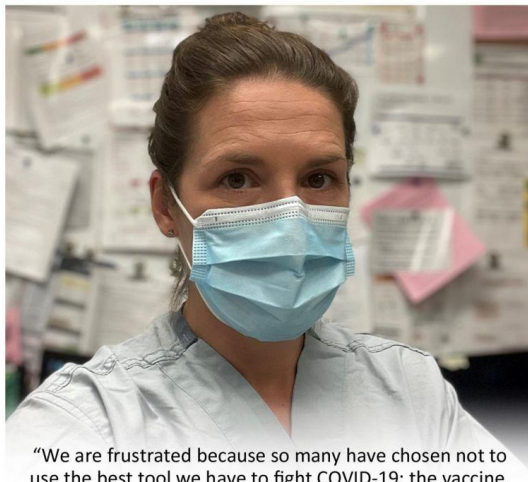
The SHA recognizes that family presence is essential to safe patient and resident care. An exemption process is being created and more information will be provided once the details are finalized.

If you have not been vaccinated, please get your vaccination. COVID-19 vaccinations are safe and effective and are your best defence against the virus. A complete list of COVID-19 vaccination clinics in Saskatchewan can be found at <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/covid19-vaccine>.

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In their own words...



"We are frustrated because so many have chosen not to use the best tool we have to fight COVID-19: the vaccine. And now many of them are extremely sick and dying."
Dr. Stephanie Young

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/ COVID-19 / Intubation means Life Support

What does it mean when you're told your loved one will be intubated and put on a ventilator? Being intubated and put on a ventilator for lung failure means that your loved one's lungs are so sick that they are not able to provide enough oxygen to the body.

Intubation means placing a breathing tube through the mouth and down the throat into the lungs. A ventilator is a breathing machine that takes over the work of breathing and increases the oxygen levels in the patient's blood.



Together, the breathing tube and the breathing machine (ventilator) provide the lungs with time to rest and recover from the COVID-19 virus. Being on a ventilator is a form of artificial life support.

“It can be very frightening for both the patient and their family when we tell them they need to go on a ventilator, that they need to be intubated in order to give their lungs and body assistance,” reports Dr. Susan Shaw, who is an ICU physician as well as the Chief Medical Officer for the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

When a patient needs to be intubated and put on a ventilator, first, the doctors will first give them a deep sedative and place the breathing tube in the right spot. Then, they will connect the breathing tube to the breathing machine (ventilator).

Patients can be on a ventilator with COVID-19 pneumonia for two weeks or longer. While a patient is on a ventilator, they are often sedated (placed in an induced coma). The sedation makes the patient comfortable and gives the lungs a rest. Slowly, as the lungs get better, it is possible to start waking the patient up to test the lungs and see if we can take out the breathing tube. Intubated patients cannot speak because the breathing tube goes through the throat and vocal cords.



“We have had to have very difficult conversations with patients and their families about intubation as the next stage of treatment for their lung failure many times during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Shaw noted. “Intubating a patient and putting them on a ventilator to help them breathe definitely means they are being put on life support, which is very scary to think about when it’s you or your loved one needing that treatment.”

The course of treatment for a person with the most severe lung failure from COVID-19 often includes being placed on a ventilator.

“It is a very serious intervention, and one that some are not strong enough to recover from,” Shaw said. “I have cared for young, otherwise well people that sadly die of COVID-19, especially during this fourth wave, because the lung rest from the ventilator was not enough to help their lungs recover from the Delta variant. Most of those people were unvaccinated.”

The COVID vaccines are the most effective way to avoid needing life support including intubation. Shaw and all of her ICU physician colleagues are urging everyone eligible to get their COVID-19 vaccines.

“The vaccines are safe and effective. You may still contract COVID-19, but the chances of you ending up in the ICU, needing to be intubated, are very small if you are fully vaccinated,” Shaw stated. “It’s an easy way to not need life support.”



| COVID-19 | Faces of the Fight:

Vaccines offer a way to gather again!

By Drs. Darcie and Reid McGonigle

Drs. Darcie and Reid McGonigle are family physicians living and working in Île-à-la-Crosse, a community in Northwest Saskatchewan that is situated on Treaty 10 territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis. They are part of a team that provides primary care, emergency room coverage, acute care, and long-term care to Île-à-la-Crosse and surrounding communities.

We always knew that we lived in a community of great strength and resilience; there is a powerful presence of Métis and First Nations heritage here that is rooted in tradition and family connectedness.

This strength and resilience has never been more apparent than during the pandemic. We have seen courageous leadership from so many individuals and groups: the mayor and council, the Friendship Centre, the school administration and teaching staff, the Elders Group, the local Métis Nation of Saskatchewan representatives, the RCMP, Sakitawak Development Corporation, the local radio station, and numerous local businesses.

Everybody has come together to contribute to the pandemic response in every way possible from spearheading food security initiatives to implementing and supporting the safest back to school plan in the province. Local leaders have listened to and championed the health-care team’s messaging from day one. We are grateful for the strengthened bonds that have developed between all of these organizations for the common goal of surviving and recovering from this pandemic.

It has made such a difference here to have so many of these leaders and community members promote COVID-19 vaccination to their friends and family. All along, vaccination has been seen as a key way to protect our Elders and medically vulnerable community members, preserve our health-care system, and get our children safely back to school and activities.

Vaccination has been seen as a way to gather again: both in times of joy with weddings and sorrow with funerals. That family connectedness and strong sense of community has powered our vaccination drive.

And yet, we still struggle with low vaccine uptake in some pockets of our population in northwest Saskatchewan.

Vaccine hesitancy is a complex issue; there is no uniform approach to a patient or community member that we encounter who has not yet been vaccinated.





We still have a lot of work to do in this area and we will continue to partner with our community leaders and health-care colleagues in surrounding communities in order to improve our vaccination rates across the northwest.

It is frustrating to know that each person that is not vaccinated could be the next patient that we have to send out to a tertiary care centre for lifesaving measures. We are especially fearful now, when we are on the cusp of not being able to provide those lifesaving measures in a health-care system that is strained at maximum capacity due to COVID-19.

Before the pandemic, if somebody stopped us in the grocery store to ask a medical question, we would apprehensively say, “sure...” and hope the subject matter wasn’t overly personal or graphic! Any physician who has worked in a small community knows this experience.

Over the past year and a half, the question topics have narrowed...COVID-19 now dominates these grocery store/gas station/post office conversations. Where we would once listen to the question and kindly ask the person to book into the clinic, **we now jump right in and use the opportunity to educate, myth-bust, and encourage vaccination.**

Our health-care team has stepped up in unimaginable ways for the past 20 months. Our acute care, public health and outpost nurses have amazed us with their ability to adapt and dedication to providing excellent care. We appreciate these team members so much and we will continue to work along side them in the coming weeks and months to provide the best care we can under increasingly difficult circumstances.

We are all going to continue to have those tough conversations with our patients, friends, neighbours, and family members about the importance of vaccines. These can be draining encounters, but **the people of the northwest deserve our time and patience and expertise.**

We have lived in Île-à-la-Crosse now for 11 years. This is not just where we work; this place is where we have raised our kids, coached sports, and where Reid has awkwardly jiggled at community events.

We have felt embraced by this community and all of the surrounding communities that we have had the privilege to spend time in. The people of the northwest are not just our patients, but have also become our friends and family.

To the people here we say: You trusted us to take care of your grandmother when she was dying of cancer in the hospital; you trusted us to take care of your child when he had a severe asthma attack; **please trust us when we encourage you to get the COVID-19 vaccine.**

Dr. Kevin Wasko Named Citizen Of The Year

Dr. Kevin Wasko, Swift Current physician and Saskatchewan Health Authority Physician Executive for Integrated Rural Health, was named Citizen of the Year at the Swift Current Business Excellence (SCBEX) awards, hosted by the Swift Current and District Chamber of Commerce, on Oct. 29.

Congratulations to Dr. Wasko!



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In their own words...

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“Please get vaccinated. It is what you can do that will make the greatest impact. If you would trust me to treat you in the emergency department when you get sick, trust me on this.”
Dr. Kevin Wasko

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