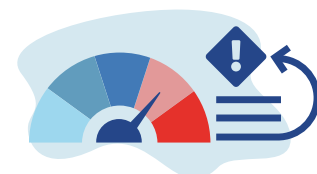


# Obesity, COVID-19 and Vaccine Priority: Here's what you need to know

In some provinces people with a Body Mass Index (BMI) >40 have been prioritized for the 2nd phase of the province's COVID-19 vaccine rollout beginning in April.<sup>1</sup>



## The World Health Organization has identified obesity as a risk for becoming severely ill from COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

Having obesity may triple the risk of hospitalization, increase the risk of death, and make the effects of COVID-19 much worse.<sup>3</sup>

It is estimated that more than eight million Canadians could be living with obesity,<sup>4</sup> and could be at risk for developing a more severe illness from COVID-19.

*Obesity is defined as excess or abnormal body fat that impairs health. BMI is just part of the definition, not the whole picture.*



**Obesity is a treatable chronic disease** caused by many factors including environment, genes, emotional health, lack of sleep, and more.<sup>5</sup> Successful treatment is not just a matter of eating less and moving more. Just like diabetes and heart disease, obesity needs proper treatment and care.

**Treating obesity is about improving health, not weight loss.**  
**Vaccine prioritization for people with obesity is a positive step forward and an effective tool in our COVID-19 vaccine strategy.**  
**We encourage people living with obesity to ask their healthcare provider for more information.**



For more information on obesity visit **ObesityCanada.ca.**

[Canadian Adult Obesity Clinical Practice Guidelines - Obesity Canada](#)

For more information on COVID-19 vaccines visit **Canada.ca/Covid-19/vaccines.**

1 CP24 (2021). This is the list of people eligible for COVID-19 vaccines in Phase 2. Accessed March 2021. Available at: <https://www.cp24.com/news/this-is-the-list-of-people-eligible-for-covid-19-vaccines-in-phase-2-1.5335668>  
2 WHO (2020). COVID-19 and NCD risk factors. Accessed March 2021. Available at: <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/ncds/un-interagency-task-force-on-ncds/uniatf-policy-brief-ncds-and-covid-030920-poster.pdf?ua=1>  
3 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021). Obesity, Race/Ethnicity, and COVID-19. Accessed March 2021. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/obesity-and-covid-19.html>  
4 Twells LK, Janssen I, Kuk JL. Canadian Adult Obesity Clinical Practice Guidelines: Epidemiology of Adult Obesity. Accessed March 2021. Available at: <https://obesitycanada.ca/guidelines/epidemiology>  
5 Obesity Canada (2020). What is Obesity? Accessed March 2021. Available at: <https://obesitycanada.ca/understanding-obesity/>