



Department of Health & Wellness

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To: Physicians & Nurse Practitioners
From: Dr. Heather Morrison, CPHO
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Date: March 26, 2021
Subject: AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Update

Very rare cases of thromboembolic events have been reported following administration of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine in several European Economic Area countries. A combination of thrombosis and thrombocytopenia, in some cases accompanied by bleeding, has been observed very rarely in the post-market setting following vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine. This includes severe cases presenting as venous thrombosis, occurring at unusual sites such as cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST), mesenteric vein thrombosis, as well as arterial thrombosis, concomitant with thrombocytopenia. **To date, similar cases have not been reported in Canada.**

Health Canada has assessed the available data on the reported events and has determined that the AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine and COVISHIELD (the version of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute of India that is currently being distributed in Canada) have not been associated with an increase in the overall risk of thrombosis.

Individuals being vaccinated with AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine or COVISHIELD are being instructed to seek immediate medical attention if they develop symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling and persistent abdominal pain following vaccination. Additionally, anyone with neurological symptoms including sudden onset of severe or persistent worsening headaches or blurred vision several days after vaccination, or who experience skin bruising (other than at the site of vaccination) or petechiae starting a few days or more after vaccination, should seek prompt medical attention.

The benefits of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine and COVISHIELD in protecting Canadians from COVID-19 continue to outweigh the risks. Canadians are encouraged to get immunized with any of the COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized and available in Canada.

Health Canada continues to evaluate the situation and we are committed to providing you with updates on the situation in the coming days.

Any serious [adverse events](#) must be reported within 24 hours to the CPHO.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Chief Public Health Office at (902) 368-4996.