



Getting AstraZeneca was the right choice to protect you and those around you

May 12, 2021 – Statement from AMOH Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum on the suspension of first doses of AstraZeneca

On Tuesday, the Province of Ontario announced a pause in the use of AstraZeneca for COVID-19 vaccine first doses in Ontario. I want the more than 20,000 people in Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph who have received this vaccine to know two things:

You made the right choice. Getting AstraZeneca means you were vaccinated earlier than you would have been had you waited for another vaccine. That protected you and the people around you from COVID-19 and helped move our community toward the end of this pandemic.

You have likely heard a lot about the risk of blood clots associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine. While our understanding of this vaccine is evolving, you should also know that this side effect is considered very rare. Putting this vaccine on hold is the right choice until we know more. We want our health system to be guided by science and use an abundance of caution when it comes to protecting us. Complications from the AstraZeneca are serious but unlikely. If you have any questions or concerns, please seek the guidance of your primary care provider.

While severe side effects with this vaccine remain rare, if you received the AstraZeneca vaccine in the previous 4 to 28 days and developed the following signs or symptoms, contact your doctor or visit an emergency room immediately: persistent and severe headache, difficulty moving parts of your body, seizures, blurred or double vision, shortness of breath, or back, chest or abdominal pain, or significant changes in a limb — pain, swelling, redness, a pale appearance or cold feeling in an arm or leg.

No one wants to hear that a medical treatment they've received might put them at risk. But, the surveillance system has done what it is supposed to do – take new scientific information and adapt our practices accordingly. I know many of you now have concerns about what this means for your second dose. Please rest assured we will follow Provincial and Federal direction on future vaccinations, guided by the best and most up-to-date information.

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