



The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by our registrants. The term nurse in this document refers to LPNs, RNs and NPs unless otherwise stated.

Contents

Clients Qualifying for an Exemption Note	2
Clients Not Qualifying for an Exemption Note	2

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The authorized COVID-19 vaccines in Canada have been shown to be safe and effective against symptomatic COVID-19, and protect against severe disease, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19.

Throughout Nova Scotia, many organizations are requiring that all staff and visitors be vaccinated against COVID-19. It is not unreasonable to expect that, in response, nurse practitioners may be asked to provide medical notes for clients who have chosen not to be vaccinated.

As nurse practitioners continue to work to mitigate any further spread of COVID-19, NSCN aims to support their leadership with clear guidance on their responsibilities in this circumstance.

Nurse practitioners must only support requests for a medical exemption from COVID-19 vaccination for clients with a legitimate medical condition that would warrant an exemption.

The office of the Chief Medical Officer advises the following are valid medical contraindications to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine:

- A history of severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) after previous administration of a COVID-19 vaccine using a similar platform (mRNA or viral vector).
- An allergy to any component of the specific COVID-19 vaccine or its container [polyethylene glycol (PEG) for Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines].
- A history of major venous and/or arterial thrombosis with thrombocytopenia following vaccination with AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.
- A history of capillary leak syndrome (CLS) following vaccination with AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.
- A history of myocarditis and/or pericarditis after a first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna).
- A history of a serious adverse event following immunization (AEFI) after the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, with “serious” defined using the World Health Organization (WHO) standard definition: an AEFI that results in death, is life threatening, requires in-patient hospitalization or prolongs an existing hospitalization, results in persistent or significant disability/incapacity, or in a congenital anomaly/birth defect.

[Click here for a memo from the Chief Medical Officer of Health regarding Valid Medical Contraindication for COVID-19 Vaccination.](#)

Immunosuppression, auto-immune disorders, pregnancy, and breastfeeding are not contraindications to COVID-19 immunization. More details regarding contraindications can be found in the “contraindications and precautions” section of the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\) website](#).

Clients Qualifying for an Exemption Note

The Department of Health and Wellness has prepared a template letter for nurse practitioners to use to certify that clients meet criteria for a medication expectation against COVID-19 vaccination. Nurse practitioner requiring a template letter should contact their employers. **Individual claiming a medical exemption will be required to have this template letter. Substitute letter or provider notes claiming medical exemption will not be accepted.** To assist in the prevention of fraudulent activity, nurse practitioners need to take appropriate actions to protection of the security of the template letter.

Clients Not Qualifying for an Exemption Note

- Advise the client that you cannot provide the template letter as requested.
- Clearly and sensitively explain the rationale, referring to this or other guidance as necessary.
- Provide the client (or refer them to) valid and reliable information about the COVID vaccine.
- Document your encounter in the client record.