



## Ontario Artistic Swimming Vaccination Requirements FAQ

On September 29, 2021, Ontario Artistic Swimming (OAS) released a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy, which is available on our website [here](#) (under OAS Policies with Application to OAS Member Clubs). The Policy requires everyone 12 and over to be vaccinated to participate in our sport and contains a reasonable transition period for any participant that is not already vaccinated (provincially defined medical exemptions apply).

### Why did OAS introduce a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy?

The OAS Vaccination Policy was created in consultation with OAS Member clubs. OAS was guided by the following considerations:

- Vaccination against COVID-19 remains the single most effective public health measure to reduce the spread of the virus. Requiring eligible individuals to be vaccinated is an important part of providing a safe sporting environment and is becoming a common practice among sport organizations that provide programs and services to the community.
- One of the core OAS values is Health and Wellness: The OAS COVID-19 Vaccination Policy is designed to protect the health of all stakeholders while providing a reasonable transition to get vaccinated for those who are not.
- Most of the pool facilities booked for OAS competitions in 2021-22 have implemented strict vaccination requirements for all persons entering the facility, including athletes, coaches, and volunteers. As a result, athletes 12 and over would be required to be vaccinated to compete. The OAS policy is in line with these requirements. By introducing the OAS Vaccination Policy now, at the start of the season, we ensure that no-one is surprised come competition season and that all athletes have an opportunity to prepare for and compete in the sport they love.
- After consultation with our Member clubs, it was clear that most of our clubs were looking to OAS to create such a Policy. We were told the different rules at facilities across Ontario were causing significant operational challenges for clubs. Some clubs train at multiple pools with different rules at each pool and they needed a standard that made it easier for everyone and one that adhered to OAS values.



### **Why does the OAS COVID-19 Vaccination Policy set a higher standard than provincial requirements?**

- The Ontario government has created a complex framework for vaccination verification to access sport facilities and many municipalities and pool facilities across the province have chosen to be more restrictive than the current government requirements
- Our Member clubs told us that the different rules at facilities across Ontario were causing significant operational challenges. Some clubs train at multiple pools with different rules at each pool and they needed a standard that made it easier for everyone and one that adhered to OAS values.
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### **Can municipalities or facilities apply stricter measures than what is set out in the Ontario proof of vaccination regulations or the OAS COVID-19 Vaccination Policy?**

- Yes, municipalities and sport facilities can be more restrictive than the current Ontario proof of vaccination regulations or the OAS COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. If this occurs, OAS, its clubs, and all their participants must abide by these rules or risk losing use of the facility and termination of their contract.

### **Are there any exemptions to the proof of vaccination requirement due to medical reasons? What proof is required?**

- Yes, individuals who are unable to be vaccinated due to medical reasons may apply for a medical exemption.
- The [Ontario Ministry of Health](#) and the [College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario](#) have each released guidance that indicates that there are very few actual contraindications to available COVID-19 vaccinations that would qualify as medical exemptions and most individuals can safely receive COVID-19 vaccines.



- In order to determine whether an individual is unable to receive the COVID-19 vaccine for medical related reasons, OAS requires the individual to submit the COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Form set out in the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy, which is available on our website [here](#). Requests for a medical exemption will be considered by the club upon submission of this form.
- The form must be completed and supplied by either a physician designated as an MD, or a Registered Nurse in the Extended Class designated as RN(EC) or Nurse Practitioner (NP) stating that the individual is exempt for a medical reason from being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and the effective time-period for the medical reason. The accommodation is only acceptable for the timeframe indicated by the medical professional in the form. The club is not allowed to keep this document; it must be kept by the individual and shown upon request.

### **I hold personal beliefs against COVID-19 vaccination. Am I entitled to an exemption?**

- As stated in the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) [Policy Statement on COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates and Proof of Vaccine Certificates](#), personal preferences or singular beliefs against vaccination do not amount to a creed under the Human Rights Code. This means that a person who chooses not to be vaccinated based on personal preference does not have a right to accommodation under the Code. Secular, socially based, or conscientiously held beliefs against COVID-19 vaccination are not protected under the Code and will not be approved as an exemption to the OAS COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

### **What are the consequences for not being vaccinated or refusing to provide proof of vaccination?**

- Individuals who are not fully vaccinated by the required deadlines, or refuse to provide proof of vaccination, will no longer be able to participate in club or OAS programming.
- Any questions relating to refunds should be directed to your club.



**If I've already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to be vaccinated?**

- Yes, any participant who has already had COVID-19 will still be required to be fully vaccinated by the required deadlines.

**If I'm fully vaccinated, will I still be subjected to potential COVID-19 testing?**

- Possibly, yes. If you are experiencing symptoms or if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you should be tested. Testing protocols may be modified based on provincial guidance, public health advice, or other circumstances including in a competition environment.

**Do I still need to wear a mask if I'm fully vaccinated?**

- Yes, current Ontario government regulation requires this of everyone in indoor areas of every sport facility.