



January 25, 2022 / 23 Shvat 5782

We, the members of RAV (Rabbinic Association of Vancouver), are unequivocally unified in our gratitude for efforts of frontline and essential workers in British Columbia. Each of us belongs to Rabbinic Associations that have statements on record that strongly support vaccination as a matter of Jewish law. We have faced two very difficult years and look forward to a light at the end of the tunnel.

The consensus of those Rabbinic organizations is that Jewish law and custom instruct that it is essential for all eligible members of our community to be vaccinated against COVID-19 for a number of important reasons.

1. Judaism obligates us to care for our own health. In addition, our tradition directs us to defer to the consensus of medical experts in determining and prescribing appropriate medical responses to both treating and preventing illness. As such, we understand Jewish law to require each of us who is eligible to vaccinate against COVID-19.
2. There is universal consensus on the obligation to care for one's own health as well as to take measures to prevent harm and illness to others. Jewish law, dating back to the Talmud, defers to the consensus of medical experts in determining and prescribing appropriate medical responses to illness and prevention. Therefore, the consensus of major rabbinic organizations supports medically approved vaccination of individuals at every stage of life to protect them from disease, to eradicate illness from the larger community through so-called herd immunity, and thus to protect others who may be vulnerable. The pandemic has placed an incredible burden— physically, emotionally, and spiritually upon our essential workers who continue to show up for work day in and day out, often working long shifts to adequately cover basic needs. Vaccination not only helps protect these individuals on the front lines, it also reduces the toll being placed upon them. While there are documented breakthrough cases of COVID-19, the majority of hospitalizations today are of unvaccinated individuals, despite the fact that the unvaccinated are a small minority within our province.
3. Too many individuals awaiting surgeries have had their procedures postponed due to the extreme demands placed on hospitals and our health care system by unvaccinated COVID-19 patients.

As the rabbis of the Rabbinical Association of Vancouver, we urge all who are not yet fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and are eligible to be vaccinated, to get their vaccination shots and boosters thereby observing Jewish and public health guidelines. As more and more children

have become infected with this virus, especially during the Omicron variant, we urge families to get their children first and second shots as soon as they are eligible. We hope and pray that such steps will help bring to an end the tragic toll that the pandemic has taken on our community and beyond.

B'shalom,

Rabbi Dan Moskovitz, RAV Chair
Temple Sholom

Rabbi Shlomo Gabay
Beit Hamidrash

Rabbi Jonathan Infeld,
Congregation Beth Israel

Rabbi Adam Stein
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Rabbi Susie Tandler
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Rabbi Philip Gibbs
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Rabbi Philip Bregman
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Rabbi Hannah Dressner
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Rabbi Andrew Rosenblatt,
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