

Fully vaccinated Canadians can avoid border quarantine soon

June 9 2021, by Rob Gillies



Joel Gardiner, left, embraces his new bride Mandi Gardiner as officiant Brooke Bakogeorge steps away after marrying the couple at the arch separating the U.S. from Canada at Peace Arch Historical State Park Tuesday, June 8, 2021, in Blaine, Wash. Gardiner, of Canada, walked across the border at the park into the U.S. earlier in the day to wed his American sweetheart. The border has been closed to nonessential travel since March 2020, but Canadians have been allowed to walk over a ditch into the U.S. park and weddings have become routine there. Credit: AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Canada's health minister said Wednesday that fully vaccinated Canadian citizens who test negative for COVID-19 will soon be exempt from two weeks quarantine when returning to the country.

Health Minister Patty Hajdu said she expects that to happen in early July.

And Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer, said she would like to see 75% of eligible Canada residents fully vaccinated before advising that border restrictions be loosened for tourists and business travelers who aren't citizens or permanent residents.

The Canadian government expects to have enough vaccine delivered for 80% of eligible Canadians to be fully vaccinated by the end of July.

The border between Canada and the U.S. remains closed to all non essential travel. The restrictions were announced in March, 2020 in the early months of the pandemic and have been extended every month since.

There are growing calls in the U.S. to open the Canada-U.S. border for non essential travel like tourism, but just 10% of eligible Canadians are fully vaccinated now.

The U.S. only allowed for the export of Pfizer vaccines in early May. Canada will get its first shipment of Moderna vaccines from the U.S. next week and 7 million Moderna doses this month. Canada has largely been getting vaccines from Europe until Pfizer exports from the U.S. began arriving in May.



Canadian residents Philip Owira, right, and Katherine Nichol walk with their baby across a small ditch from Canada into Peace Arch Historical State Park to visit a friend there, Tuesday, June 8, 2021, in Blaine, Wash. The border has been closed to nonessential travel since March 2020, but Canadians have been allowed to walk over the ditch into the U.S. park. Credit: AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

About 70% of eligible Canadians have had at least one dose of vaccine and second doses are ramping up this month and next.

The government also expects in early July to eliminate the need for fully vaccinated Canadians air travelers to spend three days quarantining in an authorized hotel upon arriving in the country. Travelers will also have to be fully vaccinated 14 days or more prior to the arrival.

Currently, air travelers are required to spend three days in quarantine at a hotel at their expense on arrival and then complete their two weeks of self-isolation.

Air travelers will still be required to take a COVID-19 test before arriving as well as on arrival, and remain in isolation until the second test comes back negative.

"As the prime minister has said we will take a phased approach towards adjusting current border measures with the health and safety of Canadians being our first priority," Hajdu said.

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