

COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet

Please read this information sheet carefully and ensure all your questions have been answered by a health care provider before receiving the vaccine.

What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), recognized for the first time in December 2019 and declared a global pandemic in March 2020.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly passed from an infected person to others when the infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks or breathes.
- Infected people can spread the infection even if they **do not** have symptoms.
- Some people infected with the virus have no symptoms at all, while others have symptoms that range from mild to severe.
- [Symptoms of COVID-19](#) can include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, tiredness, and loss of smell or taste.
- [Of people diagnosed with COVID-19 in Canada](#), about 1 in 13 require hospitalization and about 3 out of every 100 people diagnosed with COVID-19 die.
- Individuals with mild symptoms may feel unwell for a long time after a COVID-19 infection.

How does the COVID-19 vaccine protect against COVID-19 infection?

- The vaccine causes the body to produce **antibodies** to help prevent you from becoming sick if you are exposed to the COVID-19 virus.
- **Two** doses of the mRNA (Pfizer-BioNTech) COVID-19 vaccine can be 95% effective at protecting against symptomatic illness.
- **Two** doses of the mRNA (Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine can be 86-94% effective at protecting against symptomatic illness.
- **Two** doses of the non-replicating viral vector vaccine (AstraZeneca and COVISHIELD) COVID-19 vaccine can be 62% effective at protecting against symptomatic illness.
- **One dose** of the non-replicating viral vaccine (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine can be 66% effective at protecting against symptomatic illness.
- It is important to note that the vaccine does not contain the virus so **you cannot get COVID-19 infection from the vaccine.**

Who can and cannot receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Public health officials will provide information on which [individuals](#) are able to receive the vaccine at this time.
- **Table 1** below has specific information regarding those who can and those who should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Table 1: Summary Table of Those Who Can Receive the COVID-19 Vaccine, Those Who May Be Offered the COVID-19 Vaccine, and Those Who Should Not Receive the COVID-19 Vaccine

	INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN RECEIVE the COVID-19 Vaccine	INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY BE OFFERED the COVID-19 Vaccine	INDIVIDUALS WHO SHOULD NOT RECEIVE the COVID-19 Vaccine
		Individuals in this category who are at high risk of exposure to COVID-19 infection should consult with their health care provider to discuss vaccination.	
Age	16 years of age and over (Pfizer/BioNTech) 18 years of age and over (Moderna and Janssen) 18 years of age and over (AstraZeneca and COVISHIELD)	12 to 15 years of age (Pfizer/BioNTech)	11 years of age and younger (Pfizer/BioNTech) 17 years of age and younger (Moderna and Janssen) 17 years of age and younger (AstraZeneca and COVISHIELD)
Currently experiencing symptoms that could be related to COVID-19			You should not be vaccinated if you have symptoms that could be due to COVID-19 . If you are feeling unwell, complete the COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool or call 811 to arrange testing.
Current COVID-19 infection or past COVID-19 infection	You can be vaccinated if you are no longer infectious (10 days since first symptom or 10 days since positive test) and your symptoms have resolved.		You cannot be vaccinated while infectious (within 10 days of your first symptom or positive test). Attending a clinic while you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 may cause spread of infection to others.
Pregnancy		Currently pregnant or planning to become pregnant before receiving both doses of COVID-19 vaccine.	
Breastfeeding		Currently breastfeeding.	
Allergy to polyethylene glycol (Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna). Found in some cosmetics, skin care products, laxatives, cough syrups, bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, and some foods and drinks. Allergy to polysorbate 80 (AstraZeneca, COVISHIELD, and Janssen). Found in medical preparations (e.g. vitamin oils, tablets, and anti-cancer agents), cosmetics. Allergy to Tromethamine (Moderna) Found in some medications injected to do tests (contrast media) as well as other medications taken by mouth or injection, and some creams and lotions.			If you have been told you are allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG)*, polysorbate 80, Tromethamine, or have had an allergic reaction from an unknown cause, you should not be vaccinated until it is determined to be safe by an allergist or other health care provider.
You had a severe reaction or allergic reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine			If you had a serious or allergic reaction to your first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, you should not be vaccinated until it is determined to be safe by an allergist or other health care provider.
Medical conditions Talk with your health care provider prior to vaccination if you are unsure about your medical conditions		Problems with your immune system, history of autoimmune conditions or currently taking medications/treatments.	
You received another vaccine recently (not a COVID-19 vaccine)			If you received another vaccine (not a COVID-19 vaccine) in the past 14 days, you will be advised to wait two weeks from that date before you receive your COVID-19 vaccine.

* The vaccine has not been studied well enough in the “**Generally Should Not Receive**” category. Therefore it is recommended to discuss with your primary health care provider if you are at high risk of exposure to COVID-19.

* Polyethylene glycol (PEG) can rarely cause allergic reactions and is found in products such as medications, bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrups, cosmetics, and skin creams, medical products used on the skin and during operations, toothpaste, contact lenses and contact lens solution. PEG also can be found in foods or drinks, but is not known to cause allergic reactions from foods or drinks.

In addition to the information in *Table 1*, tell the health care provider if:

- **You have fainted or felt faint after receiving past vaccines or medical procedures.** Your health care provider may recommend that you receive the vaccine lying down to prevent fainting.
- **You have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting.** This information will help the health care provider prevent bleeding or bruising from the needle.

How is the vaccine administered?

The vaccine is given as an injection into the muscle of the upper arm and will require two doses. It is important to receive both doses of the vaccine to ensure optimal protection from COVID-19 infection.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Side effects are expected and can indicate the vaccine is working to protect you from COVID-19 infection. Side effects can develop in the days following the vaccination and can include one or more of the following:

- Pain, tenderness, and swelling where the needle was given
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Joint pain
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- Chills
- Fever
- Enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands)
- Dizziness, decreased appetite, excessive sweating, itchy skin or rash

About 1 in 100,000 people could experience serious, potentially life threatening blood clots, and low levels of platelets in the 4 to 28 days following the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccination.

If you experience any of the following symptoms in the 4-28 days after immunization with AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD, you should seek immediate medical attention or call 811 or 911.

- Persistent and severe headache, seizures, blurred vision
- Focal neurological symptoms (Movement changes or sensation changes that affects specific functions, for example, weakness or loss of muscle control on the left or right side of the face, left or right arm, or even a small area such as the tongue, difficulty moving any part of your body). Problems with speech, vision, and hearing can also occur.)
- Shortness of breath
- Chest or severe abdominal pain or pain that does not go away
- New swelling, pain, or color change of an arm or a leg
- Bruising or pin point rash under the skin

Allergic reactions are rare but can happen after receiving a vaccine. The immunization clinic staff are prepared to manage an allergic reaction should it occur. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include:

- Hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy)
- Swelling of your face, tongue or throat
- Difficulty breathing

What public health measures have been put in place to safely provide immunizations during COVID-19?

Health care providers are being very careful to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when offering immunizations.

Examples of safety measures include the following:

- You will be asked about [any COVID-19 symptoms](#) when you arrive at the clinic. People with symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend the clinic.
- You will be asked to wear a mask while at the clinic and stay at least 6 feet away from others (except those in your household bubble).
- Staff will be wearing masks and cleaning their hands and work areas before and after each client.

What should you do before coming to the clinic?

- Wear a short-sleeve shirt or top with sleeves that are easy to roll up.
- To prevent feeling faint while being vaccinated, have something to eat before coming to the clinic.
- Bring your non-expired MCP card.
- Bring your immunization record with you and/or download the [CANImmunize](#) app to keep track of this and other vaccines.

What should you do after receiving the vaccine?

- **Wait for at least 15 minutes.**
- **Inform a health care provider** at the clinic if you feel unwell.
- **Call 9-1-1 right away if you develop any serious symptoms or symptoms of an allergic reaction.**
- **Continue to follow the recommendations of local public health officials** to prevent spread of COVID-19. Such as wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from others and limiting social contacts.
- **Wait 28 days after a dose of COVID-19 vaccine before receiving any other vaccines.**
- As a precaution, **avoid pregnancy until at least 28 days** after the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Keep your immunization record** with information about the COVID-19 vaccine in a safe place.

When should I return for my second dose?

You will be provided with an appointment or information about booking your second dose during your first visit. Bring your immunization record with you when you come to your next appointment.

If you have any questions please contact your health care provider.