



# COVID-19 Vaccines

## Protect yourself. Protect others.

**Vaccines are safe and reliable. They are an important way to protect you and your family from COVID-19.**

### How do vaccines work?

Vaccines work with your body's natural defences to build protection. They teach your body how to recognize and fight the COVID-19 virus.

### Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

- All COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing COVID-19. They also reduce the risk of serious illness, hospitalization and death.
- Health Canada only approves vaccines that are safe, effective and of high quality.
- More than 1.37 billion people have received COVID-19 vaccines around the world.
- The vaccines cannot give you COVID-19 and do not affect COVID-19 test results.

### Do I have to pay to get vaccinated?

No. The vaccine is free. You do not need an Ontario Health Card or health coverage.

### Why should I get vaccinated?

Getting vaccinated is important because:

- When you are vaccinated you build immunity. This helps protect you from getting the disease.
- The more people vaccinated in the community, the lower the risk of infection for those who:
  - can't be vaccinated
  - are too young to receive vaccines
  - have weakened immune systems and may not respond as well to the vaccine

When you are vaccinated you help to create community immunity. This is sometimes called herd immunity. COVID-19 can be a serious illness for many people. For some people, even young healthy people, symptoms can last for months. Getting vaccinated is a safe and effective way to build protection against the virus.

### When should I not get vaccinated?

- If you have a fever or are sick with COVID-19 symptoms. Please call to rebook your appointment for another time.
- If you have received another vaccine in the last 14 days. Some examples include flu shot, tetanus, or any other vaccination.
- If you are under 12 years of age for Pfizer vaccine; and, under 18 years of age for Moderna, AstraZeneca, Janssen vaccine.

At this time, children under 12 are not eligible to get the vaccine. Clinical trials are underway on children aged 6 months to 11 years old.



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## What if I am pregnant?

COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for pregnant and breastfeeding individuals.

If you are unsure if you should get the vaccine while planning to become pregnant, are pregnant or breastfeeding, please speak with your doctor, nurse practitioner or midwife. This will help you in your decision about getting vaccinated for COVID-19.

## What if I have a health condition?

People with health conditions can receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Some examples of stable health conditions include: diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, respiratory diseases (including asthma or COPD), hepatitis B, C or HIV.

People with weakened immunity due to illness, treatment or autoimmune disease can also receive the vaccine. They may have a lower immune response to the vaccine.

## What if I tested positive for COVID-19 in the past?

People who have recovered from COVID-19 infection should still be vaccinated. Natural immunity from a COVID-19 illness may not last long. There is a risk of new infection with the variants that are circulating in the community. It is best to get vaccinated to stay protected.

## Where can I get vaccinated?

COVID-19 vaccination is provided through pharmacies, doctors, nurse practitioners, mobile and fixed clinics in rural communities.

## After I am vaccinated should I still follow public health measures?

Yes. It is important to keep following public health measures after you are vaccinated:

- Avoid gatherings with people who live outside your home.
- Limit trips outside your home (groceries, medical appointments, work).
- Stay 2 metres (6 feet) away from people you do not live with.
- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands often with warm water and soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid indoor spaces and crowded places.
- When you are sick, stay home and isolate from others in your house.

## After vaccination please remember to:

- Keep the paper and/or electronic slip for your vaccination record.
- Let your doctor or nurse practitioner know you have been vaccinated.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner if you have any serious reaction after vaccination. This is especially important if symptoms last longer than 3 days.

## What are the side effects?

COVID-19 vaccines, like all vaccines, can cause side effects. Some side effects are part of the body learning how to build immunity. Although not everyone gets them, the most common side effects are: pain at the injection site, headache, feeling tired, muscle or joint pain, fever or chills, redness or swelling at the injection site



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