



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS VACCINE

Please read this carefully and ensure a health care provider answers your questions before getting the vaccine

Health Canada has approved four COVID-19 vaccines for use in Canada: Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca/Covishield and Janssen. The first three are available for use in Nova Scotia at this time. All products meet health and safety requirements.

What is coronavirus (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 was seen for the first time in December 2019. It has since spread around the world to cause a pandemic. New versions of the virus called variants are also emerging. 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. However, it's also possible for people with COVID-19 to spread it to others when they don't have any symptoms.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include cough, shortness of breath, sneezing and runny/stuffy nose, fever and chills. Some people infected with the virus have no symptoms at all. Others have symptoms that range from mild to severe.

Of people diagnosed with COVID-19 in Canada, about one in 13 need to be admitted to hospital for care. About three people out of every 100 diagnosed with COVID-19 die. Even people with mild symptoms may feel unwell for a long time after having COVID-19.

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

The vaccine causes our body to produce protection (such as antibodies) to help keep us from becoming sick if we are exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines use a new method called messenger RNA (mRNA) to help our body protect itself against the virus.

In a large study where people were given two doses of the vaccine, the vaccine was shown to work very well at preventing people from becoming sick with COVID-19. The group of people who got the vaccine were much less likely (at least 94% less likely) to become sick with COVID-19 in the weeks after getting the vaccine, compared with the group that did not get the vaccine.

The AstraZeneca/Covishield vaccine uses a fairly new method of vaccine technology called a non-replicating viral vector vaccine. The vector virus (called adenovirus), is changed to carry COVID-19 genes but is altered so it cannot cause disease. The vaccine stimulates our body to make protection against the COVID-19 virus without us becoming sick. Data suggests that the AstraZeneca vaccine had slightly lower efficacy (82%) than the mRNA vaccines following a second dose 12 or more weeks after the first.

You cannot get a COVID-19 infection from the vaccine.

Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine at this time?

Public health officials will provide information on which groups of people are able to get the vaccine at this time. This is based on several factors including who is at high risk of COVID-19 infection and severe disease, and the amount of vaccine available. You can find more information at novascotia.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/ about when you will be able to get the vaccine.

If you have any symptoms that could be due to COVID-19, you should not go out to get your vaccine at this time because you could spread the infection to others. Talk with your health care provider or call 811 about your symptoms and getting a COVID-19 test. Your health care provider will tell you when you can get the vaccine.

For information visit: novascotia.ca/coronavirus

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Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine?

ELIGIBILITY	CAN GET	MAY BE ABLE TO GET	SHOULD NOT GET
Age:			
<i>Moderna vaccine: 18 years of age and older</i>	✓		
<i>Pfizer vaccine: 16 years of age and older</i>			
<i>AstraZeneca/Covishield vaccine: between 18 and 64 years of age</i>			
Feeling unwell with symptoms that could be COVID-19			✗
Have had a COVID-19 infection:			
<i>But feel better and are no longer infectious (cleared by Public Health)</i>	✓		
<i>Could spread COVID-19 to others or still feel unwell from a recent infection</i>			✗
Have received monoclonal antibodies for COVID-19 treatment <i>provide date when received to health care provider</i>		★	
Breastfeeding or pregnant: <i>currently or planning to be before getting both doses of vaccine. Learn more here.</i>		★	
Allergies:			
Polyethylene glycol (PEG) can rarely cause allergic reactions. It is found in products such as medications, bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrups, cosmetics, skin creams, medical products used on the skin and during operations, toothpaste, contact lenses and contact lens solution.			Pfizer or Moderna
Tromethamine (trometamol or Tris) is a component in contrast media, oral and parenteral medications.			Moderna
Polysorbates are found in other medications (e.g. vaccines, vitamins, oils, anticancer treatment and medication tablets) and some creams and ointments.			Astra-Zeneca
Had a severe reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine, including allergic reaction			✗
Problems with immune system:			
<i>Problems with your immune system from disease or treatment</i>		★	
<i>Autoimmune conditions</i>		★	
Was vaccinated in the past 14 days (not a COVID-19 vaccine)			✗



If you identify with any of the situations in the ★ **MAY BE ABLE TO GET** ★ column, you should discuss your personal risks of COVID-19 and potential benefits and risks of getting the vaccine with your doctor, nurse practitioner, specialist, clinic nurse or pharmacist familiar with your medical history before deciding whether getting the vaccine is right for you.

In addition to the above information, tell the health care provider if:

- You have fainted or felt faint after getting past vaccines or medical procedures. Your health care provider may recommend that you get 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.
- You have had an anaphylactic reaction to another vaccine or to an injectable medication or product. You can get the vaccine but will be observed in the clinic for 30 minutes after vaccination in case of an unexpected allergic reaction.

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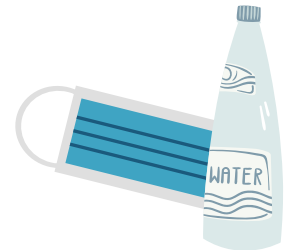
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Information for people getting the COVID-19 vaccine



What should I do right after getting the vaccine?



What should I do before coming to the clinic for my appointment?

- 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. Is it also important to drink water and stay hydrated.
- Bring a mask to wear while you're in the building.
- Bring any identification required by the clinic, such as your health card.
- If you have a vaccine record, bring it with you.

- Stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting the vaccine. You may be asked to wait for 30 minutes if there is concern about a possible vaccine allergy.
- If you have a support person with you, you may be asked to wait in the clinic or outside the clinic (such as in your vehicle). If you are asked to wait outside, let the health care provider at the clinic know if you do not have a warm, dry place to wait.
- Tell a health care provider at the clinic if you feel unwell while waiting. If waiting in your vehicle, honk your horn to get their attention.
- If waiting inside the clinic, be sure to leave your mask on and stay at least two metres away from anyone who is not part of your household.
- Use the alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands before leaving the clinic.
- **Do not** operate a vehicle or other form of transportation for at least 15 to 30 minutes after getting the vaccine, or if you are feeling unwell.
- In rare cases, people can faint or have an allergic reaction after getting a vaccine. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include:
 - *hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy)*
 - *swelling of your face, tongue or throat*
 - *or difficulty breathing*

Clinic staff are prepared to manage these events if they happen. Tell a health care provider at the clinic right away if you have any of these symptoms.

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What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine? What can I expect over the next few days?

In a large study, half of the people who got the COVID-19 vaccine were followed for at least two months. No serious side effects have been found to date. People who got the vaccine in studies continue to be followed for any longer term side effects.

People can have side effects in the day or two after getting the vaccine. Although these side effects are not serious, they may make you feel unwell for about one to three days. They will go away on their own. These types of side effects are expected and can show the vaccine is working to produce protection in your body.

The most common side effect is pain where the needle was given. You may also have swelling or redness where the needle was given. It can help to place a cool, damp cloth or wrapped ice pack where the vaccine was given.

Other symptoms may include tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, nausea, vomiting, chills, fever or enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands) in your underarm.

If you need it, pain or fever medication (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen) may help with pain or fever. Check with your health care provider if you need advice about medication.

Serious side effects after getting the vaccine are rare. However, should you develop any serious symptoms that could be an allergic reaction, call 911 right away. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include:

- *hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy)*
- *swelling of the face, tongue or throat*
- *difficulty breathing*

If you have any concerns about the symptoms you develop after getting the vaccine, contact your health care provider for advice.

If you still need to get your second dose, tell the person providing the second dose about any side effects you experienced with the first dose.

When should I return for my second dose of vaccine?

The vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm. A second dose will be given four months after your first dose. It is very important to get the second dose for the vaccine to work well. Follow the instructions to ensure you get the second dose at the right time.

Bring your vaccine record with the name of the COVID-19 vaccine and date you received it with you for the second dose. Tell the person providing the second dose about any side effects you experienced after the first dose.

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Information for people getting the COVID-19 vaccine



What steps have been put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at vaccine clinics?

Health care providers are being very careful to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when offering the COVID-19 vaccine. Examples of extra safety measures include:

- You will be asked about any COVID-19 symptoms; if you have traveled outside Nova Scotia or been a close contact of a recent case of COVID-19 when you arrive at the clinic. **People with symptoms of COVID-19 or those who answer YES to the above questions should not attend the clinic.**
- You will be asked to wear a mask while at the clinic, as well as to sanitize your hands, and to stay at least two metres (6 feet) from others (except those you live with or a support person).
- The staff will also be wearing personal protective equipment and will be cleaning their hands before and after each client.
- Be sure to read and follow any signs or instructions provided.

Things to remember

Even after you have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, continue to follow public health guidance to prevent spread of COVID-19:

- *wear a mask*
- *stay at least two metres from others*
- *limit contact with others outside your household*
- *clean your hands regularly*

Do not get any other vaccines (except for your second COVID-19 vaccine) until you have gotten both doses of the COVID-19 vaccines and at least 28 days have passed after the second dose (unless considered necessary by your health care provider).

If you are planning to become pregnant, delay this until at least 28 days have passed after the second dose.

Keep this sheet or other immunization record in a safe place.

Do not get a TB (tuberculin) test until 4 weeks after your COVID-19 vaccine.



If you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine:

- > Call your health care provider
- > Visit novascotia.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/

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