COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet

mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

Please read this information sheet carefully and ensure that your questions have been answered by a health care provider before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This virus can spread from person to person through activities such as coughing, sneezing and talking. COVID-19 may also spread by touching something that has the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands. Some people infected with the virus may have no symptoms at all, while others have symptoms that range from mild to severe.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- sore throat
- runny nose
- sneezing
- new or worsening cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- temperature equal to or more than 38°C
- feeling feverish
- chills
- fatigue or weakness
- muscle or body aches
- new loss of smell or taste
- headache
- abdominal pain, diarrhea and vomiting
- feeling very unwell

How do the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines protect against COVID-19?

The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines (Moderna Spikevax® and Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty®) protect against infection from the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) that causes COVID-19. The vaccines trigger your body to produce antibodies and provide strong protection against severe COVID-19 illness, including hospitalization and death. When you get immunized, you help protect others including those who are unable to get the vaccine.

Who should receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

The schedule for COVID-19 vaccination for previously vaccinated individuals is one dose per year. Two doses per year are recommended for the following higher risk individuals:

• Adults 65 years of age or older
• Residents of long-term care homes, as well as residents of other congregate living settings for seniors
• Individuals 6 months of age and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised (due to an underlying condition or treatment)

The minimum interval between COVID-19 vaccine doses in those previously vaccinated is 3 months.

For those who are previously vaccinated and who test positive for SARS-CoV-2, a minimum of 3 months from test-confirmed infection to COVID-19 vaccination may be considered.

- For those with a test-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, the interval that can be considered from infection to vaccination **in the primary series is**:
    - 8 weeks for those who are not moderately to severely immunocompromised, and
    - 4 to 8 weeks for those who are moderately to severely immunocompromised)

Immunization is particularly important for those at increased risk of COVID-19 infection or severe disease, for example:

- Adults 65 years of age or older;
- Residents of long-term care homes and other congregate living settings;
- Individuals with underlying medical conditions that place them at higher risk of severe COVID-19;

- Individuals who are pregnant;
- Individuals in or from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities;
- Members of racialized and other equity-deserving communities;
- People who provide essential community services.

COVID-19 vaccines may be given concurrently (i.e., same day), or at any time before or after non-COVID-19 vaccines (including live and non-live vaccines).

How is the COVID-19 vaccine administered?

The vaccine is given as an Intramuscular (IM) injection.

Who should not receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

If you have had a serious or allergic reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine, you should not be vaccinated until it is determined to be safe by a health care provider. The following lists potential allergens included in the vaccine.

Vaccine product (manufacturer)	**Potential allergen included in the vaccine**	**Other products where the allergen may be found***
Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty® **6 months of age and older** **Moderna SPIKEVAX® COVID-19** **6 months of age and older**	Polyethylene glycol (PEG) Tromethamine Tromethamine hydrochloride (Tris, Trometamol)	Bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrup, cosmetics, contact lens care solutions, skin care products, and as an additive in some food and drinks Contrast agents, some oral and parenteral medications.

Talk to your health-care provider prior to immunization with the COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- Have had a serious allergic reaction after a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine
- Have had an allergic reaction to any contents of the vaccine
- Were diagnosed with inflammation of the heart (myocarditis or pericarditis) by a physician within 6 weeks after a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine without another cause being identified.
- Have a history of MIS-C (rare multi-system inflammatory syndrome) following COVID-19. Individuals with a history of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children or adults (MIS-C or MIS-A) should wait to be vaccinated for at least 90 days from diagnosis or clinical recovery, whichever is longer.
- Anyone with high fever should postpone immunization until recovered.
- Anyone with a mild illness can still receive the vaccine.

Precautions

- **Please let the immunizer know if you;**
    - have fainted or felt faint after receiving past vaccines or medical procedures.
    - have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting.

Very rare cases of myocarditis and/or pericarditis following vaccination have been reported during post-authorization use. There is an increased risk for myocarditis and pericarditis following vaccination primarily occurring more often in young male adults. Individuals with a history of confirmed myocarditis (with or without pericarditis) after a dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may choose to receive an additional dose of mRNA vaccine after discussing the risks and benefits with their healthcare provider.

Very rare cases of Bell's palsy (typically temporary weakness or paralysis on one side of the face) have been reported following vaccination with mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. However, available evidence is not currently sufficient to support a causal relationship between the mRNA vaccines and Bell's palsy. Symptoms appear suddenly and generally start to improve after a few weeks.

What should I do right after receiving the vaccine?

- **Wait for at least 15 minutes** after receiving your vaccine. Longer waiting times of 30 minutes may be recommended if there is concern about a possible vaccine allergy. Though uncommon, fainting or allergic reactions can occur after vaccination. **Inform a health care provider** at the clinic if you feel unwell while waiting.
- If you have had an allergic reaction to any medication or vaccine given by injection or intravenous (IV) you will be observed in the clinic for 30 minutes after being vaccinated with mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Do not operate a vehicle** or other form of transportation for at least 15 to 30 minutes after being vaccinated or if you are feeling unwell.
- Pain or fever medication (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen) may help with pain or fever.

What are the possible reactions after the vaccines?

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to have a COVID-19 infection. The vaccines are not live virus vaccines and cannot give you COVID-19. Common reactions to the vaccines may include soreness, redness, swelling and itchiness where the vaccine was given. Most side effects after a COVID-19 vaccine are mild and go away within a few days. Some people may also notice **swollen or tender lymph nodes** under the arm (or in the groin area).
Common whole-body reactions include tiredness**,** headache**,** muscle aches**,** chills, and joint pain. In children aged **6 months to 2 years**, common reactions may include: fussiness or crying, sleepiness, reduced appetite. These reactions are common after many childhood vaccines and usually improve within a few days.

Serious side effects after receiving the vaccine are rare. However, **if you develop any serious symptoms or symptoms that could be an allergic reaction, call 9-1-1 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
A fast heartbeat
Dizziness and weakness

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

Things to remember

- *PEI residents ages 16 and over can view a copy of their immunization records through the MyHealthPEI portal on the PEI government's website.*
- You can download the CANImmunize app to keep track of the vaccines you have received.
- **Any serious side effects after vaccination should be reported to your local Public Health Office or Health Care Provider.**

Charlottetown (902) 368-4530
Montague (902) 838-0762
Souris (902) 687-7049
Summerside (902) 888-8160
O'Leary (902) 859-8720
Wellington (902) 854-7270