



COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet

Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty® COVID-19 Vaccine & Moderna SPIKEVAX® COVID-19 Vaccine

Please read this information sheet carefully and ensure that all of 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 a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 is mainly passed from an infected person to others when the infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks or breathes.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 can include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, tiredness and loss of smell or taste. Some people infected with the virus may have no symptoms at all, while others have symptoms that range from mild to severe.

How do the vaccines protect against COVID-19?

- The vaccines cause our body to produce protection (such as **antibodies**) to help keep us from becoming sick if we are exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Health Canada has approved both the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty® and Moderna Spikevax® vaccines to immunize Canadians against COVID-19. Both vaccines use a new method called messenger RNA (mRNA) which helps our body protect against the virus.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty® and Moderna Spikevax® vaccines have shown to work very well at preventing people from becoming sick with COVID-19 compared to those who did not receive the vaccine.
- Moderna Spikevax® vaccine has been shown to be 50.6% effective against symptomatic COVID-19 infection starting 14 days after dose 2 among study participants aged 6 to 23 months and 36.8% among participants aged 2 to 5 years.

Who should receive the COVID-19 Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccine?

- Those individuals 5 years of age and older without contraindications can receive Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty® vaccine.
- Individuals 6 months of age and older without contraindication can receive Moderna Spikevax® vaccine.
- For children 5 to 11 years of age PfizerBioNTech Comirnaty® is the preferred mRNA COVID vaccine to start or continue the primary series. Moderna Spikevax® may be offered as an alternative vaccine.
- The following groups should be offered the vaccine as long as informed consent is given. Informed consent should include information about the lack of data on the use of the mRNA vaccines in these populations.
 - Immune suppressed people (due to disease or treatment)
 - Those with an auto-immune disorder
 - Pregnant or breastfeeding women

How is the COVID-19 vaccine administered?

The vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm

Who should not receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

If you have had a serious or allergic reaction to your first COVID-19 vaccine, you should not be vaccinated until it is determined to be safe by a health care provider.

- A proven immediate or anaphylactic hypersensitivity to the vaccine or one of the following ingredients in the vaccine;

Vaccine product (manufacturer)	Potential allergen included in the vaccine	Other products where the allergen may be found*
Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty® COVID-19 5 years of age and older	Polyethylene glycol (PEG) Tris/Sucrose	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.
Moderna SPIKEVAX® COVID-19 6 months and older	Polyethylene glycol (PEG) Tromethamine (trometamol, Tris)	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.

Precautions

- Children 6 months to 5 years of age should be offered Moderna Spikevax® vaccine. Informed consent should include information about the lack of data on the use of the Moderna Spikevax® vaccine in this population. PfizerBioNTech Comirnaty® has not been approved for children under 5 years of age.
- You should wait at least 8 weeks¹ between each dose (primary series) of COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Children receiving Moderna Spikevax® 6 months to 5 years of age** should wait 2 weeks² before or after receiving any other vaccine before getting your COVID-19 vaccine.

¹ The manufacturer has a minimum interval of 21 days for Pfizer Comirnaty and 28 days for Moderna Spikevax.

² In the absence of evidence, it would be prudent to wait for a period of at least 14 days BEFORE or AFTER the administration of another vaccine before administering a COVID-19 vaccine to prevent erroneous attribution of an AEFI to one particular vaccine or the other.

- **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 with Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty® or Moderna Spikevax® COVID-19 Vaccine have been reported. These cases occurred more commonly after the second dose and in adolescents and young adults. Typically, the onset of symptoms has been within a few days following receipt of an mRNA COVID19 Vaccine.
 - Individuals with a history of confirmed myocarditis (with or without pericarditis) after a dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may choose to receive another dose of vaccine after discussing the risks and benefits with their healthcare provider.
- mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty®/Moderna Spikevax®) has been associated with very rare reports of Bell's Palsy following vaccination. Cases have been reported in a small number of people in Canada and internationally.
 - Bell's Palsy is an episode of facial muscle weakness or paralysis. The condition is typically temporary. Symptoms appear suddenly and generally start to improve after a few weeks.
 - Seek medical attention if you experience any combination of the following symptoms after vaccination: uncoordinated movement of the muscles that control facial expressions, such as smiling, squinting, blinking or closing the eyelid, loss of feeling in the face, headache, tearing from the eye, drooling, lost sense of taste on the front two-thirds of the tongue, hypersensitivity to sound in the one ear, inability to close an eye on one side of the face.

Who should receive a booster dose or 3rd dose of COVID-19 vaccine?

- A third dose in a primary series of COVID-19 mRNA vaccine is recommended between 4 and 8 weeks (minimum interval is 28 days) after the 2nd dose of to those 6 months of age and older in the following groups
 - Moderately to severely immunosuppressed individuals
- A booster dose of mRNA vaccine is recommended at least 6 months after administration of the last dose in a primary series for those 12 years of age and older.
- A booster dose is not yet recommended for those under 12 years of age.

Should you be vaccinated if you test positive for Covid-19? A complete series of COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for individuals who have been infected with COVID-19. Timing is based on whether receiving a primary series or a booster dose.

COVID-19 Vaccine After-Care Information Sheet

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.

What should I expect in the next few days?

- Side effects can develop in the day or two after receiving the vaccine. Although these side effects are not serious to your health, they may make you feel unwell for a day or two; they will go away on their own.
 - The most common side effect is pain or swelling where the needle was given. A cool, damp cloth or wrapped ice pack where the vaccine was given may help.
 - Other symptoms may include tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills or fever. Enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands) that last for several days may also occur.
 - Young children may experience irritability/crying and loss of appetite.
 - If needed, 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 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
- If you have any concerns about the symptoms you develop after receiving the vaccine, contact your health care provider for advice.

When should I return for my next dose of vaccine?

- It is important to receive all the doses in the series for the vaccine to work well.
- Depending on the vaccine you receive and your health situation, the health care provider will discuss the number of doses you require to complete your COVID-19 vaccine series.

Things to remember

- 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.**

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