

Ministry of Health

COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet

Version 6.0 – May 19, 2021

This document provides basic information only and is not intended to provide or take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or legal advice.

To date, the following COVID-19 vaccines have been authorized for use in Canada by Health Canada: [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#), [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#), [AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine](#), [COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccine](#), and [Janssen COVID-19 vaccine](#). Currently, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is the only COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada for children aged 12 and up.

All [vaccines for COVID-19](#) authorized for use in Canada have been evaluated by Health Canada, using rigorous standards. Health Canada will continue to monitor all vaccines to make sure they are safe and effective.

Please read this information sheet carefully and make sure all your questions have been answered by a health care provider before you get the vaccine.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 was recognized for the first time in December 2019 and has since spread around the world to cause a pandemic. COVID-19 is mainly passed from an infected person to others when the infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks or breathes. It is important to note that infected people can spread the infection even if they have no symptoms. [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 have no symptoms at all, while others have symptoms that range from mild to severe.

Children who get infected with COVID-19 typically experience mild symptoms.

However, some children can get very sick requiring hospitalization. Children can also get a serious medical condition called “Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children.” Others can experience more serious, longer-lasting symptoms that can affect their health and well-being. In very rare cases, the virus can also cause death

in children. Like adults, children also can transmit the virus to others if they are infected, even if they don't feel sick.

How do the vaccines protect against COVID-19?

All vaccines work by presenting our body with something that looks like the infection so that our immune system can learn how to produce its own natural protection. This natural protection then helps to prevent future illness if you come into contact with the COVID-19 virus in the future. **You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.**

More detailed information on how COVID-19 vaccines provide protection can be found on [Public Health Ontario's \(PHO\) COVID-19 Vaccines](#) webpage and [What You Need to Know About mRNA Vaccines](#) and [What You Need to Know About Viral Vector Vaccines](#).

All COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in Canada are effective at protecting against symptomatic, lab-confirmed disease. In large studies where people were given the vaccines, all of the vaccines worked very well to prevent people from becoming sick with symptomatic, lab-confirmed COVID-19. Vaccine efficacy 14 days after dose one and before dose two is estimated to be over 90% for Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna and over 70% for AstraZeneca and COVISHIELD. Vaccine efficacy after dose two at the recommended interval is estimated to be over 90% for Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna and over 80% for AstraZeneca and COVISHIELD. Vaccine efficacy 14 days after the single dose Janssen vaccine is estimated to be 67%. It is important that you receive both doses of the vaccines, Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca or COVISHIELD since they are two dose vaccine series. Long-term protection against COVID-19 is not achieved until after the second dose of vaccine is received for two dose vaccines. Janssen is a single dose vaccine, and provides protection after one dose of vaccine. **All of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in Canada are highly effective at preventing hospitalizations.**

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been demonstrated to be highly effective at protecting against COVID-19 for individuals 12 and over. The Pfizer-BioNTech clinical trial studied 2,260 youth aged 12 to 15 years old in the United States. In the trial, there were 18 cases of COVID-19 in the group that did not get the vaccine (the

“placebo” group) compared to zero cases in the vaccinated group. Based on these results, the vaccine was calculated to be 100% effective in the trial.

Who can receive these vaccines?

A complete vaccine series should be offered to individuals without contraindications to the vaccine and in currently identified priority groups.

- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is currently authorized for individuals 12 years of age and older.
- The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is currently authorized for individuals 18 years of age and older.
- The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine and COVISHIELD is currently authorized for individuals 18 years of age and older. At this time, Ontario is pausing the rollout and administration of first doses of AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccines. At present, this vaccine is being offered to individuals 40 years of age and older for second doses only.
- The Janssen COVID-19 vaccine is currently authorized for individuals 18 years of age and older. In Ontario, this vaccine will be offered to individuals 30 years of age and older.

To find out if you are eligible to receive the vaccine at this time based on prioritization please refer to [Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan](#).

You will be counselled on the benefits and risks of the vaccine you are receiving prior to receiving the vaccine.

If you have experienced major venous and/or arterial thrombosis (blood clot) with thrombocytopenia (low platelets) following vaccination with any vaccine **you cannot get** the AstraZeneca/ COVISHIELD or Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have experienced a previous cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) with thrombocytopenia or have experienced heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT) **you cannot get** the AstraZeneca, COVISHIELD or Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.

Before receiving the vaccine, inform the health care provider at the clinic who is providing you with the vaccine if:

- You are currently feeling unwell or have signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- You have had a previous allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine or any ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccines, or any other vaccine.
- You have any allergies or allergic conditions.
- You are or could be pregnant or are breastfeeding. You can still get your vaccine if you are pregnant or are breastfeeding.
- You are immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment or have been diagnosed with an autoimmune condition.
- You have fainted or became dizzy after receiving a previous vaccine or medical procedure or you have a fear of needles. The healthcare provider may offer supports to assist you, for example, recommending 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 healthcare provider prevent bleeding or bruising from the needle at the time of vaccination.
- You have received any other vaccine (not COVID-19 vaccine) in the past 14 days.

The [Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) guidance document provides additional information for people who are breastfeeding or pregnant, have allergies, autoimmune conditions, or are immunocompromised due to disease or treatment, as well as for adolescents at very high risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19. The [Vaccination in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Decision-Making Support Tool](#) can help make an informed decision about COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy and breastfeeding. If you have questions about whether the vaccine is right for you based on your medical condition, talk to your health care provider.

Who should delay receiving these vaccines?

- Individuals who have received another vaccine (not a COVID-19 vaccine) in the previous 14 days.

- Individuals with symptoms of an acute illness (e.g., runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever, chills, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting); these individuals should wait until symptoms have completely resolved in order to avoid attributing any complications resulting from the illness to vaccine-related side effects.
- Individuals with [symptoms of COVID-19](#) (e.g., loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath, etc.) To minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission, if these individuals arrive at an immunization venue, they will be instructed to follow current local public health measures including self-isolation, and be encouraged to get tested.
- Symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals who have been advised to self-isolate due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection or due to close contact with a COVID-19 case should not attend a vaccine clinic and should wait to get their vaccine until their isolation period is over.

How is the vaccine administered?

The COVID-19 vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm (into the deltoid muscle). The province is following current [recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) to extend the time interval of the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna up to 16 weeks after the first dose and AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccines at or greater than 12 weeks. The Janssen vaccine is a single dose vaccine. Only one dose is required.

Individuals should receive the same COVID-19 vaccine product for their full vaccine series (i.e. individual should get the same vaccine for their first and second dose). Individuals who received a first dose of AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD and who do not wish to receive AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD for a second dose will be provided the option to receive an mRNA vaccine product for their second dose.

What are the ingredients in the vaccines?

Ingredients		Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	AstraZeneca/and COVISHIELD	Janssen
Medical		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mRNA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mRNA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-replicating viral vector (ChAd) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-replicating viral vector, adenovirus type 26 (Ad26)
Non-medical	Lipids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALC-0315 ALC-0159 – a polyethylene glycol (PEG) 1,2-Distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine (DSPC) Cholesterol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine (DSPC) Cholesterol PEG2000 DMG SM-102 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disodium edetate dihydrate (EDTA) Ethanol L-Histidine L-Histidine hydrochloride monohydrate Polysorbate 80 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-hydroxypropyl-β-cyclodextrin (HBCD) Ethanol Polysorbate 80
	Salts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate Monobasic potassium phosphate Potassium chloride Sodium chloride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acetic acid Sodium acetate trihydrate Tromethamine Tromethamine hydrochloride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Magnesium chloride hexahydrate Sodium chloride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sodium chloride Sodium hydroxide Trisodium citrate dihydrate Citric acid monohydrate Hydrochloric acid
	Sugar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sucrose Water for injection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sucrose Water for injection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sucrose Water for injection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water for injection

COVID-19 vaccines do not contain eggs, gelatin (pork), gluten, latex, preservatives, antibiotics or aluminum.

It is important to review this list carefully as some people may be allergic to these ingredients, including **polyethylene glycol (PEG)**, and **polysorbate 80** and/or **tromethamine**. However, these rarely cause allergic reactions. Polyethylene glycol (PEG) is found in products such as medications, bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrups, dermal fillers, cosmetics, skin creams, toothpaste, contact lenses and contact lens solution. Polyethylene glycol can also be found in food or drinks, but is not known to cause allergic reactions from food or drinks. Polysorbate 80 is found in medical preparations (such as vitamin oils, tablets, and anticancer agents) and cosmetics. Tromethamine (trometamol or Tris) is a component in contrast media, oral and parenteral medications.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines, like all vaccines, may cause side effects in both adults and children, although not everyone experiences them and those who do experience them, mostly report mild side effects within the first 1-2 days after vaccination. The most commonly reported side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine are localized reactions including pain, swelling, and colour changes in the skin (e.g. red, purple) at the injection site, and tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, and mild fever.

Ongoing studies on these COVID-19 vaccines indicate serious side effects found to-date are **extremely rare**. People who have received the vaccine in these studies continue to be monitored for any longer-term side effects.

Clinic staff are prepared to manage a severe allergic reaction should it occur. When receiving your second dose of COVID-19 vaccine, **tell the health care provider administering the second dose if you had any side effects after the first dose.**

Very rarely, the AstraZeneca, COVISHIELD and Janssen COVID-19 vaccines have been associated with a rare form of blood clot after vaccination. Doctors are calling this Vaccine-Induced Immune Thrombotic [Thrombocytopenia](#) (VITT). These blood clots have two important features: they typically occur 4 to 28 days after vaccination, and they are associated with low platelets (tiny blood cells that help form blood clots to stop bleeding). VITT seems to be rare. The rate of VITT is estimated to be approximately 1 per 26,000 and 1 per 127,000 persons vaccinated with AstraZeneca and/or COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccine. Although the true risk estimate for VITT following the Janssen vaccine is unknown, it may be similar to the range observed for AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD. To date, there have been 28 cases identified following 8.7 million doses of Janssen vaccine in the United States for a rate of approximately 1 in 300,000 doses administered, with additional cases under investigation.

When should I call my health care provider?

If you experience side effects that are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days, contact your health care provider or seek medical attention.

Go to the nearest **emergency department or call 911** if any of the following adverse reactions develop within three days of receiving the vaccine:

- hives
- swelling of the face or mouth
- trouble breathing
- serious drowsiness
- high fever (over 40°C)
- convulsions or seizures
- other serious symptoms (e.g., “pins and needles” or numbness)

If you have received the AstraZeneca/ COVISHIELD or Janssen vaccine and you develop any of the following symptoms after receiving the vaccine **please seek immediate medical attention:**

- shortness of breath
- chest pain
- leg swelling or pain
- persistent abdominal pain
- skin bruising (other than at the site of vaccination) or petechiae (red or purple spots or blood blisters under the skin)
- sudden onset of severe headaches or persistent or worsening headaches
- blurred vision, double vision or dizziness
- confusion or seizures
- difficulty speaking or moving a part of the body

You can also contact your [local public health unit](#) to ask questions or to report an adverse reaction.

When should I return for my second dose?

If this is your first dose of a two dose vaccine, be sure to return for your second dose as instructed by the vaccination clinic or the health care provider who provided you with your first dose. It is important that you receive two doses of the vaccine as protection against COVID-19 is not optimal until after the second dose of vaccine is received. Bring your immunization record when you come for your second dose. **It is very important that you receive the second dose even if you experienced side effects the first time.**

If this is your first dose of the Janssen vaccine, **you do not need to return for a second dose.** The Janssen vaccine only requires one dose of vaccine for protection against COVID-19.

Who should I contact with any questions?

If you have any questions, please speak with your health care provider or the person providing the vaccine.

Ministry of Health

COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet: For Youth (age 12-17)

Version 1.0 – May 19, 2021

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To date, the following COVID-19 vaccines have been authorized for use in Canada by Health Canada: [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#), [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#), [AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine](#), [COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccine](#), and [Janssen COVID-19 vaccine](#). Currently, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is the only COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada for children aged 12 and up.

All [vaccines for COVID-19](#) authorized for use in Canada have been evaluated by Health Canada, using rigorous standards. Health Canada will continue to monitor all vaccines to make sure they are safe and effective.

Please read this information sheet carefully and make sure all your questions have been answered by a health care provider before you get the vaccine.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 was recognized for the first time in December 2019 and has since spread around the world to cause a pandemic. COVID-19 is mainly passed from an infected person to others when the infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks or breathes. It is important to note that infected people can spread the infection even if they have no symptoms. [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 have no symptoms at all, while others have symptoms that range from mild to severe.

Children who get infected with COVID-19 typically experience mild symptoms.

However, some children can get very sick requiring hospitalization. Children can also get a serious medical condition called "Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children." Others can experience more serious, longer-lasting symptoms that can

affect their health and well-being. In very rare cases, the virus can also cause death in children. Like adults, children also can transmit the virus to others if they are infected, even if they don't feel sick.

How do the vaccines protect against COVID-19?

All vaccines work by presenting our body with something that looks like the infection so that our immune system can learn how to produce its own natural protection. This natural protection then helps to prevent future illness if you come into contact with the COVID-19 virus in the future. **You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.**

All COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in Canada are effective at protecting against symptomatic, lab-confirmed disease.

- Vaccine efficacy 14 days after dose one and before dose two is estimated to be over 90% for Pfizer-BioNTech.
- It is important that you receive **both doses** of the vaccines. Long-term protection against COVID-19 is not achieved until after the second dose of vaccine is received for two dose vaccines.

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been demonstrated to be highly effective at protecting against COVID-19 for individuals 12 and over. The Pfizer-BioNTech clinical trial studied 2,260 youth aged 12 to 15 years old in the United States. In the trial, there were 18 cases of COVID-19 in the group that did not get the vaccine (the “placebo” group) compared to zero cases in the vaccinated group. Based on these results, the vaccine was calculated to be 100% effective in the trial.

Who can receive these vaccines?

A complete vaccine series should be offered to individuals without contraindications to the vaccine and in currently identified priority groups.

- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is currently authorized for individuals 12 years of age and older.

At the vaccination clinic, you will be counselled on the benefits and risks of the vaccine you are receiving prior to receiving the vaccine.

- You should receive the same COVID-19 vaccine product for your first and second dose.

Before receiving the vaccine, tell the health care provider at the clinic who is helping you if:

- You are currently feeling unwell or have signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- You have had a previous allergic reaction to any other vaccine, a COVID-19 vaccine (if this is your 2nd dose) or any ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccines which are listed below in this document.
- You have any allergies or allergic conditions to anything.
- You are or could be pregnant or are breastfeeding. You can still get your vaccine if you are pregnant or are breastfeeding.
- You are immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment or have been diagnosed with an autoimmune condition.
- You have ever fainted or became dizzy after receiving a vaccine or a medical procedure, or you have a fear of needles. The healthcare provider may offer supports to assist you to make the experience safer and more comfortable for you.
- You have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting. This information will help the healthcare provider prevent bleeding or bruising from the needle at the time of vaccination.
- You have received any other vaccine (not COVID-19 vaccine) in the past 14 days.

The [Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) guidance document provides additional information for people who are breastfeeding or pregnant, have allergies, autoimmune conditions, or are immunocompromised due to disease or treatment, as well as for adolescents at very high risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19. The [Vaccination in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Decision-Making Support Tool](#) can help make an informed decision about COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy and breastfeeding. If you have questions about whether the vaccine is right for you based on your medical condition, talk to the health care provider who provides care to you like a specialist, your paediatrician or family doctor.

What are the ingredients in the vaccines?

Ingredients		Pfizer-BioNTech
Medical		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mRNA
Non-medical	Lipids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALC-0315 ALC-0159 – a polyethylene glycol (PEG) 1,2-Distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine (DSPC) Cholesterol
	Salts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate Monobasic potassium phosphate Potassium chloride Sodium chloride
	Sugar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sucrose Water for injection

COVID-19 vaccines **do not** contain eggs, gelatin (pork), gluten, latex, preservatives, antibiotics or aluminum.

Who should wait to get their COVID-19 vaccine?

- People who have received another vaccine (not a COVID-19 vaccine) in the previous 14 days.
- People with symptoms of an acute illness (e.g., runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever, chills, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting); they should wait until symptoms have completely resolved/ gotten better in order to avoid confusing any complications resulting from the illness to a vaccine-related side effect.
- People with [symptoms of COVID-19](#) – they should self-isolate, and be encouraged to get tested.
- Anyone who has been advised to self-isolate because of COVID-19 by public health or another health provider.

How is the vaccine administered?

- The COVID-19 vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm (into the deltoid muscle).

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines, like all vaccines, may cause side effects, although not everyone experiences them. Those who do experience them, mostly report mild side effects within the first 1-2 days after vaccination. The most commonly reported side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine are localized reactions including pain, swelling, and colour changes in the skin (e.g. red, purple) at the injection site, and tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, and mild fever.

Ongoing studies on these COVID-19 vaccines indicate serious side effects found to-date are **extremely rare**. People who have received the vaccine in these studies continue to be monitored for any longer-term side effects.

Clinic staff are prepared to manage a severe allergic reaction should it occur. When receiving your second dose of COVID-19 vaccine, **tell the health care provider administering the second dose if you had any side effects after the first dose.**

If I am feeling unwell after my vaccine, when should I call my health care provider?

If you experience side effects that are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days, talk to your parents or caregivers and contact your health care provider. Go to the nearest **emergency department or call 911** if any of the following adverse reactions develop within three days of receiving the vaccine:

- hives
- swelling of the face or mouth
- trouble breathing
- serious drowsiness
- high fever (over 40°C)
- convulsions or seizures
- other serious symptoms (e.g., "pins and needles" or numbness)

You can also contact your [local public health unit](#) to ask questions.

When should I return for my second dose?

If this is your first dose of the vaccine, be sure to return for your second dose as instructed by the vaccination clinic or the health care provider who provided you with your first dose. It is important that you receive two doses of the vaccine as protection against COVID-19 is not optimal until after the second dose of vaccine is received. Bring your immunization record when you come for your second dose. **It is very important that you receive the second dose even if you experienced side effects the first time.**

Who should I contact with any questions?

If you have any questions, please speak with your health care provider or the person providing the vaccine. If you are in school, your principal or other school staff may also be able to help answer questions for you.