

Ministry of Health

What youth need to know about their COVID-19 vaccine appointment

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

Please read this document to know what to expect for your upcoming vaccine appointment.

Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccination

What do I need to bring to the appointment?

- Your health card/Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card (even if it is expired). If you do not have an OHIP card that is okay. **You can still get vaccinated if you do not have an OHIP card, or if your OHIP card is expired.** Please bring another form of government-issued photo identification (ID) such as a driver's license, passport, Status card, or birth certificate. If you do not have a health card or government-issued photo ID, please speak to your principal and they can give you an official letter with your name, date of birth and address.
- Immunization record, if available, to keep track of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Proof of COVID-19 immunization from first dose, if available and applicable
- An [allergy form](#), if you have are allergic to a component of your vaccine (you can read the ingredients of the vaccine in the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet: For Youth \(age 12-17\)](#)).
- Any assistive devices needed (e.g., scooter, wheelchair, cane) and items to help pass the time (e.g., cell phone, book).
- Reading glasses and/or hearing aid, if required.
- Mask that covers the mouth, nose and chin.

- A support person, if required (e.g., interpreter, someone to help you during the vaccination, your parent/guardian).
- If you are nervous about the vaccination, bring something to help distract yourself, such as a mobile device, headphones for music, or a book.

What do I need to do to prepare for the appointment?

- Read the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet: for Youth \(age 12-17\)](#) and follow up with your regular health care provider (such as your family doctor, nurse practitioner or pediatrician) with any questions you have. You may want to talk to your parent or guardian too.
- If you regularly take medication, you should continue and eat meals as usual. Make sure to eat before coming to the clinic to prevent feeling faint or dizzy while being vaccinated.
- Wear a loose-fitting top or a t-shirt so that the health care provider can easily access the upper arm for the vaccination.
- Do not wear any scented products.
- **If you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#), you should not attend the clinic. Get in touch with your school or the vaccine clinic and they can help you to rebook.**
- Do not arrive more than 10 minutes before the appointment time to avoid crowding at the clinic.
- You may need to wait outside before your appointment. Please dress for the weather.

What can I expect when I arrive at the appointment?

Health care providers are being very careful to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when providing immunizations. Clinic staff will take every precaution to ensure your health and safety during your visit. Public health measures, such as physical distancing, hand sanitization, mask-wearing will be in place at clinics. All health care providers, patients, other staff, and visitors need to follow all public health measures in the clinic. Please read and follow any signs or instructions provided at the clinic.

- You will be asked to provide an OHIP card or identification.

- You will be asked to answer a series of questions to see if you have the signs or symptoms associated with COVID-19 before entering the clinic (like the health screening you do before you come to school for example).
- You will be asked questions about your medical history (for example, about any allergies you have).
- Everyone will be asked to wear a mask while at the clinic, to clean your hands, and practice physical distancing from others (at least 2 metres/6 feet).
- You will be asked to stay for 15-30 minutes after receiving the vaccine to monitor for any unexpected changes in health or allergic reactions.

Can I consent to this vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines are only provided if informed consent is received from the person to be vaccinated, including those aged 12 to 17, and as long as you have the capacity to make this decision. This means that you understand:

- what vaccination involves,
- why it is being recommended; and
- the risks and benefits of accepting or refusing to be vaccinated.

Even if you are able to provide informed consent, it would be a good idea to talk about this decision with your parent/guardian or an adult you trust such as your principal or a teacher.

If you are not able to consent to receiving the vaccine, you require consent from your substitute decision-maker, such as their parent or legal guardian.

What if I have allergies?

The health care provider at the vaccine clinic will ask if you have allergies and talk through what is right for you – you may be asked to wait longer at the clinic after your immunization,

The [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet: for Youth \(age 12-17\)](#) has details about the vaccine ingredients, including polyethylene glycol (PEG), tromethamine, and/or polysorbate 80.

For more detailed recommendations for individuals with allergies, please consult [Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) guidance document

What if I have other medical conditions?

Please consult the [Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) guidance document for information. If you have a medical condition for which you receive ongoing treatment, you may wish to speak to your health care provider about whether the vaccine is right for you.

What if I take blood thinners?

If you have a bleeding problem, bruise easily, or use a blood-thinning medicine (e.g. warfarin or heparin) you can receive the vaccine.

What if I fainted the last time I got a vaccine or I have a fear of needles?

If you have fainted, or became dizzy with previous vaccinations or procedures, or if you have a high level of fear about injections, you should still get the vaccine. Tell the health care provider at the clinic so that appropriate supports can be offered. You can also bring a person with you for support such as a friend or your parent/guardian.

COVID-19 Vaccination After Care

What should I do right after receiving the vaccine?

- After your vaccine, you should stay in the clinic for 15 to 30 minutes. This is to make sure you do not have an allergic reaction. Allergic reactions do not happen often. Staff giving vaccines know how to treat allergic reactions. Let staff know if you notice a skin rash, swelling of your face or mouth or throat, problems breathing, and/or feel unwell.
- If waiting inside the clinic, be sure to leave your mask on and remain at least 2 metres/6 feet away from others.
- 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 being vaccinated (as advised by the health care provider) or if you are feeling unwell.
- If someone is picking you up from the clinic, they should get you after the 15 to 30 minute waiting period in the clinic is finished. Your support person or driver should follow the direction of clinic staff regarding where to meet/collect you.

What should I expect in the next few days?

- You may have some side effects from the vaccine. They should go away in a few days.
- Common expected side effects include: pain, swelling and colour changes (e.g. red, purple) at the site where the needle was given. Applying a cool, damp cloth where the vaccine was given may help with soreness.
- Other symptoms may include: tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, and fever. If needed, pain or fever medication (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen) may help with pain or fever.
- Serious side effects after receiving the vaccine are rare. However, should any of the following adverse reactions develop within three days of receiving the vaccine, seek medical attention right away or call 911 if severely unwell: hives, swelling of the face or mouth or throat, trouble breathing, serious drowsiness, high fever (over 40°C), convulsions or seizures, or other serious symptoms (e.g., "pins and needles" or numbness).
- If you are concerned about any reactions you experience after receiving the vaccine, contact your health care provider. You can also contact your [local public health unit](#) to ask questions or to report an adverse reaction.

Things to remember after you receive the vaccine

- Continue wearing a mask, staying at least 2 metres from others and limiting/avoiding contact with others outside of your household.
- Do not receive any other vaccines from now until at least 28 days after any dose of your COVID-19 vaccine (unless considered necessary by your health care provider). Keep this sheet (or other immunization record) AND your printed COVID-19 immunization receipt from the vaccination today in a safe place and bring it with you for follow-up COVID-19 vaccinations as instructed by the vaccination clinic.