Q: What is the difference with AstraZeneca vaccine and the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine?

AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine was manufactured by AstraZeneca at the University of Oxford and COVISHIELD was manufactured by Serum Institute of India. Both are AstraZeneca vaccines. We will be receiving both AstraZeneca vaccines with the COVISHIELD arriving first.

Health Canada has reviewed the manufacturing information for both these vaccines and found them to be comparable and interchangeable. This means, you can receive the vaccine first with AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD and your second dose with the AstraZeneca or vice versa.

For more information, visit Health Canada’s AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine: What you should know.

Q: What is the COVISHIELD vaccine?

AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine is a vaccine used to prevent coronavirus disease (COVID-19) caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It can be given to adults over 18 years of age and under 65 years old.

For those who are interested in learning more about this vaccine, more information can be found in this public guide: COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine, A Guide for the Public.

In this guide, you will find the following information:

- What the vaccine is
- Who the vaccine is for
- Precautions
- Benefits and side effects
- Getting the vaccine
- How the vaccine was tested
Q: I hear lots of discussion about the “effectiveness” of the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine. Can you tell me more?

All of the vaccines approved by Health Canada are effective at protecting against COVID-19 disease.

Having another vaccine available will help us in our goal to extend more protection to more people as soon as possible. The most effective public immunization campaign involves everyone who can get a vaccine doing so in a timely manner. Our goal is to see everyone offered a vaccine.

To learn more detailed clinical information on its efficacy, visit COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca and the COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine, A Guide for the Public.

Q: Will I be able to choose which COVID-19 vaccine I want?

It is everyone’s choice to receive or not receive the COVISHIELD vaccine.

At this time, you are not able to choose which vaccine product you prefer when arriving at your vaccine appointment. You have the right to choose and wait for the one you prefer but then will have to balance being vulnerable to COVID-19 for a longer period and risk either getting the disease or continue to spread it to others.

Waiting for an mRNA vaccine for example, is only a marginal increase in efficacy. All the vaccines that we have available for use in Canada are safe and effective, and even a single dose from all of the approved vaccines provides good protection to you.

Just like all other vaccines, the one offered to you is the best one to keep yourself safe and protected as soon as possible, for as long as possible.

You may prefer to consult your healthcare provider and discuss the right decision for you.

What is the rationale and how do you decide who gets what vaccine based on the comments above?

The decision on why you were chosen to get the COVISHIELD vaccine is based on a variety of factors, including what products are available; what product is approved for your age or health conditions; allergies to any of the vaccine ingredients; your location and whether the vaccine can be delivered there, and more.

For more information on New-Brunswick’s vaccine roll out plan, please visit the GNB website section here and Canada’s response here.

To learn more about all of the currently approved vaccines, visit the GNB vaccine public section.
**Q: How does the vaccine work?**

COVISHIELD stimulates the body's natural defences (immune system), by causing the body to produce its own protection (antibodies) against the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the COVID-19 infection.

For more information, see: AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine: What you should know and COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine, A Guide for the Public.

**Q: How was the vaccine made?**

The vaccine contains a common cold virus, which was modified so that it can't multiply in the body. To make the vaccine, genetic code for the coronavirus spike protein was added to the "modified" cold virus. It is designed to stimulate your immune system by causing the body to produce its own protection (antibodies) against the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the COVID-19 infection.

The “modified virus” technology used for this vaccine has already been tested as a way to make vaccines for other diseases. The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 or a cold. These changes to the common cold virus allow the vaccine to deliver the spike protein genetic code to your cells without causing COVID-19.

After vaccination, your body recognizes the spike protein as an ‘invader’ and your body creates antibodies and memory cells. If they spot the coronavirus in the future, more antibodies are produced very quickly.

For more information, see: COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine, A Guide for the Public and section on how the vaccine was made.

**Q: What is in the vaccine?**

The COVISHIELD vaccine is made up of an active ingredient and other inactive ingredients to allow the vaccine to be given by injection. The inactive ingredients also keep the vaccine stable (stop it from changing), but there are no preservatives used.

The active ingredient is: a modified common cold virus (COVID-19 Vaccine ChAdOx1-S [recombinant]) originally found in chimpanzees. This virus has been altered in the laboratory, so it cannot multiply inside your body.

The inactive ingredients are:

- L-Histidine;
- L-Histidine hydrochloride monohydrate (both amino acids);
- Magnesium chloride hexahydrate (supports activities inside cells);
- Polysorbate 80 (a stabilizer);
- Ethanol (alcohol);
- Sucrose (sugar);
- Sodium chloride (salt);
- Disodium
- Edetate dihydrate (EDTA, a binding agent);
- Water for injection.

The ingredients of this vaccine cannot cause COVID-19 or colds. These ingredients work together to ensure that the vaccine is effective and remains stable. While the ingredients are slightly different for each vaccine, they ultimately achieve the same goal, and are crucial in keeping the vaccine effective after it’s manufactured.

To learn more about ingredients and how they are used in vaccines, click [here](#) or on questions about COVID-19 Immunizations

**Q: Are the ingredients in the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine the same as the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD?**

Yes, the ingredients are exactly the same.

**Q: Does it contain latex?**

AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine does not contain latex (including the vial and its stopper).

For more information on the vaccine and its ingredients, click on [The COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine, A Guide for the Public](#)

**Q: Does it contain preservatives?**

AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine does not contain any preservatives.

For more information on the vaccine and its ingredients, click on [The COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine, A Guide for the Public](#)

**Q: Does it contain eggs or other animal ingredients?**

AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine does not contain milk, lactose, soya, egg, maize/corn starch, peanuts or gluten.
None of the vaccine ingredients are of human or animal origin, however the active ingredient of the vaccine is grown using cells that are of human origin. None of these cells remain after the vaccine is purified and is ready to be given.

Information on the ingredients is included in the COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine, A Guide for the Public. Individuals can use this information to decide whether the vaccine is compliant with their own religious belief systems.

**Q: What is the dosing schedule?**

The COVISHIELD vaccination consists of **two** separate doses of 0.5 mL each that goes into your shoulder muscle. The second dose should be administered between 4 and 12 weeks after the first dose.

As per the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): Rapid Response statement, the 2nd dose can be extended to 16 weeks to optimize early vaccine rollout and population protection in Canada. New-Brunswick has opted for a **14-week dose interval** to have a 2-week buffer for unforeseen circumstances.

Individuals should complete the vaccination course with either COVISHIELD or AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine.

As with any vaccine, COVISHIELD may not fully protect all those who receive it. Like other vaccines it may also take about two weeks after immunization for the vaccine to reach its full effect. Even after you have had both doses of the vaccine, continue to follow the recommendations of local public health officials to prevent spread of COVID-19. The duration of protection against Covid-19 disease is currently unknown.

For more information on New-Brunswick’s vaccine roll out plan, visit the GNB website vaccination plan.

**Q: What should you mention to your healthcare provider before you get COVISHIELD vaccine?**

Tell the healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including:

* If you have ever had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) after any drug, food, any vaccine or any ingredients of COVISHIELD™ vaccine
* If you have a fever
* If you have a bleeding disorder or are on a blood thinner
* If you are immunocompromised or are on a medicine that affects your immune system
* If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant
* If you are breastfeeding
Q: What are the Side effects that have been reported with the COVISHIELD vaccine?

**Very Common** (may affect more than 1 in 10 people)
* Tenderness, pain, warmth, redness, itching, swelling, or bruising where the injection is given
* Generally feeling unwell
* Feeling tired (fatigue)
* Chills or feeling feverish
* Headache
* Feeling sick (nausea)
* Joint pain or muscle ache

**Common** (may affect up to 1 in 10 people)
* A lump at the injection site
* Fever
* Being sick (vomiting)
* Flu-like symptoms, such as high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, cough and chills

**Uncommon** (may affect up to 1 in 100 people)
* Feeling dizzy
* Decreased appetite
* Abdominal pain
* Enlarged lymph nodes
* Excessive sweating, itchy skin or rash

If you are unwell and your symptoms have not resolved after a few days, stay home to self isolate and call 811 to get tested.

For more information on the COVISHIELD vaccine, click on [The COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine, A Guide for the Public](#).

Q: What if I decide not to get the COVISHIELD vaccine and wait for another one?

It is your choice to receive or not receive the COVISHIELD vaccine.

All of the vaccines approved by Health Canada are effective at protecting against COVID-19 and the one offered to you is the best one. Which COVID-19 vaccine offered to you is based on a variety of factors, including what products are available; what product is approved for your age or health conditions; allergies to any of the vaccine
ingredients; your location and whether the vaccine can be delivered there, and more. You may prefer to consult your healthcare provider and discuss the right decision for you.

For more information on New-Brunswick’s vaccine roll out plan, visit the [GNB website vaccination plan](https://www.gnb.ca/en/coronavirus/vaccine).

**Q: Will the COVISHIELD vaccine give me Covid-19 infection?**

No. The COVISHIELD Covid-19 vaccine does not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus and cannot give you Covid-19 infection.


**Q: Can my child under 18 years of age receive the vaccine?**

The safety and efficacy of COVISHIELD in children under 18 years of age have not yet been established. It has not been approved by Health Canada for use in this age group.

**Q: I have allergies. Should I get this vaccine?**

You should not receive COVISHIELD if you:

- Had a severe allergic reaction to any of the medicinal ingredients or any of the other ingredients in this vaccine. See [What are the ingredients in COVISHIELD](https://www.gnb.ca/en/coronavirus/vaccine) in the public guide.

To help avoid side effects and ensure proper use, talk to your healthcare professional before you take COVISHIELD including if you:

- Have any allergies or previous problems following administration of COVISHIELD such as an allergic reaction or breathing problem.

- Have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) after any other vaccine injection

Q: How was the vaccine tested?

Worldwide, over 55,000 people have taken part in testing this vaccine as clinical trial participants, receiving either vaccine or a placebo. The technology used for this vaccine has already been tested and successfully used as a way to make vaccines for other diseases. Development of AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine has been fast, but not rushed. The testing of coronavirus vaccines has been faster than usual because the pandemic is a global health emergency and many more resources were focused on producing these vaccines. No risks have been taken with vaccine safety.

Health Canada and regulatory agencies that authorize medicines have clear and strict rules for the authorization of any new medicine. For more information, see How Canada authorizes vaccines and Safety monitoring after authorization on Health Canada’s website.

You can also find all related information on approved COVID-19 vaccines in Canada, here., on our GNB FAQ section or specifically for AstraZeneca click on The COVISHIELD COVID-19 Vaccine, A Guide for the Public.

Q: I would like to find more information on this vaccine, vaccines in general and other vaccines approved in Canada. Where do I find more information?

- Vaccines for COVID-19: Authorized vaccines in Canada
- Health Canada AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine: What you should know
- AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine website
- AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD website
- Immunise.ca COVID-19 vaccine specific FAQs
- On the GNB website vaccine section for the public