HOW DOES MRNA VACCINES PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19?

The vaccine causes our body to produce protection (such as antibodies) that prevent the COVID-19 virus from entering our cells to make us sick. The vaccine uses a new method messenger RNA - or “mRNA” - which is the genetic code for a piece of the virus that helps our bodies produce protection against the virus.

WHO SHOULD GET THE VACCINE?

This vaccine can be used for anyone who meets the age requirement, and no contraindications exist. This includes:

• People who have already been sick with COVID-19 can get the vaccine once they have fulfilled the necessary isolation period determined by the province and are feeling better. Symptoms of an acute illness should be completely resolved prior to vaccination. NACI recommends that all recommended doses including booster doses be offered for those who previously had COVID-19 irrespective of previous infection severity
• For people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, mRNA vaccines are preferred for use during pregnancy, due to recently published data from a study in the United States indicating the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are safe in pregnant women. More information can be found on the GNB Vaccine Website.
• Anyone who has received their flu shot or other nonCOVID vaccine can now safely get a COVID-19 vaccine without any waiting period. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends that COVID-19 vaccines may be given at the same time as, or any time before or after, other vaccines, including live, non-live, adjuvanted, and non-adjuvanted vaccines.
• If you are wondering if the vaccine is right for you, talk to your healthcare provider.

YOU SHOULD NOT GET THE VACCINE IF:

• You do not meet the age requirement identified on the GNB Vaccine Website.
• You are currently experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Wait until your symptoms are resolved and cleared by Public Health then book an appointment to get your vaccine.
• You have a severe allergy to any ingredient in the vaccine, including polyethylene glycol (PEG) (Pfizer and Moderna) or tromethamine (Moderna).
• You had a severe reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine, such as an allergic reaction, and have been advised by a healthcare provider not to get a subsequent dose.
COVID-19 VACCINE

• You are earlier than the recommended interval between your doses of the COVID-19 Vaccines. Make an appointment or follow the instructions of the healthcare provider to ensure you receive the next dose at the right time. Receiving your next dose at the right time and completing your series will ensure your safety and the best possible protection for you.
• You have had a severe reaction to a previous dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, including an allergic reaction, and a healthcare professional has advised you not to receive a second dose. Consult your health care provider regarding the possibility to receive your vaccine in a controlled environment.
• You experienced myocarditis or pericarditis after receiving an mRNA vaccine. As a precautionary measure, defer your second vaccination with an mRNA vaccine until more information is available.
• Having a prior medical history of myocarditis and/or pericarditis does not prevent getting your very first dose of mRNA.
• The benefits of receiving an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine primary series continue to outweigh any potential risks of rare adverse events, including the rare risk of myocarditis in adolescents and young adults 12 to 29 years of age and more frequently after the second dose. To date, symptoms have generally been mild, and individuals tend to recover quickly.
• If any of these circumstances apply, please talk to your healthcare provider about your options.

TELL THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF:
• You have fainted or felt faint after receiving past vaccines or medical procedures.
• You have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting.
• You have a high risk of severe allergic reaction, i.e. you have had an anaphylaxis reaction to a previous non-COVID vaccine.

Arrangements may be made to provide a different vaccine type, or for you to get immunized where advanced medical care can be promptly provided (i.e. hospital).

HOW IS THE VACCINE GIVEN?
The vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm and will require two doses. If this is your first COVID-19 vaccine, be sure to return for your second dose when indicated.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO BEFORE COMING TO THE CLINIC?
• Wear a short-sleeve shirt or top with sleeves that are easy to roll up.
• Have something to eat before coming to the clinic.
• Bring your mask.
• Bring any identification required by the clinic, such as your health card.
• If you are returning for your next dose of the vaccine, bring your record of immunization from your first dose. You may register online on MyHealthNB to obtain a record of your COVID-19 immunizations.
• If your side effects mimic COVID-19 symptoms, stay home until you feel better and get tested if your symptoms last longer than two days.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIDE EFFECTS OF THE VACCINE AND WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS?
• Common 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 about one to three days. The side-effects usually will go away on their own.
• Common side effects include: pain, redness or swelling where the needle was given, tiredness, muscle aches, headache, muscle
pain, joint pain, nausea, vomiting, chills or fever. Enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands) in your underarm may also occur.

- For comfort, you can put a cool/damp cloth on the injection site, rest, and/or take pain or fever medication (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen). Your health care provider may provide you with additional guidance.
- Many of the common side-effects may indicate infection with COVID-19. If you have been infected with COVID-19 at the time of immunization, the vaccine cannot prevent the illness. If you have any COVID-19 symptoms that have not resolved after two days, stay home, self-isolate and register online or call 811 to get tested.

ARE THERE ANY RARE SIDE-EFFECTS I SHOULD WATCH FOR?

- Rarely, serious symptoms or symptoms of a life-threatening allergic reaction can occur after receiving a vaccine.
  - After you have left the clinic, call 9-1-1 right away, if you experience any respiratory distress or symptoms of anaphylaxis. Symptoms of a life-threatening allergic reaction can include hives, swelling of your face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing.
- Symptoms of an allergic reaction include hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy), swelling of your face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing. The clinic staff are prepared to manage an allergic reaction should occur. Notify a clinic staff person immediately if you any of these symptoms after getting the vaccine.
- Rarely Bell’s palsy (weakened or inability to move the muscles of the face) has been reported after mRNA vaccines. Seek medical attention if your child experiences facial weakness or drooping or other symptoms involving the face.
- If you experience, shortness of breath, chest pain, or the feeling of a fast, pounding or fluttering heartbeat, seek immediate medical care. These may be symptoms of very rare conditions of myocarditis or pericarditis. To date, symptoms have generally been mild, and individuals tend to recover quickly.
- The use of the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty (30 mcg) will be reserved for youth and adults ages 12-29 or in order to further minimize the rare risk of adolescents and young adults experiencing myocarditis and/or pericarditis after receiving a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. Pfizer Spikevax will also be reserved to those who have contraindications to receiving the Moderna vaccine.
- If you are aged 12-29 and still wish to receive the Moderna vaccine, you may do so by with informed consent, meaning that you have received the full knowledge of the rare risk of myocarditis or pericarditis and benefits of vaccinations. By granting permission to obtain the vaccine on the NB COVID-19 Consent form, you understand that:
  - New Canadian and international data suggest the risk of myocarditis following vaccination with a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine is lower with the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty vaccine compared to the Moderna Spikevax vaccine particularly after a second dose in males 12 to 29 years of age.
  - The benefits of receiving an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine primary series continue to outweigh any potential risks of rare adverse events, including the rare risk of myocarditis in adolescents and young adults 12 to 29 years of age.
  - Any serious side-effects or common side-effects that last 72 hours after vaccination should be reported to your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will do an assessment and provide you with medical advice. If your healthcare provider thinks the symptoms are related to the vaccine that was given, Public Health will be consulted.
WHAT SHOULD YOU DO AFTER RECEIVING AN MRNA VACCINE AND THINGS TO REMEMBER AFTER GETTING YOUR VACCINE.

- Wait for 15-30 minutes after receiving your vaccine in a space provided for you by the healthcare provider. Longer waiting times may be recommended if there is concern about a possible vaccine allergy. Be sure to leave your mask on and maintain 2 metres of physical distancing from others.
- Tell the healthcare provider at the clinic if you feel unwell while waiting. If you have been asked to wait in your vehicle, you can honk your horn to get assistance. Do not operate a vehicle or other form of transportation for at least 15-30 minutes after being vaccinated or if you are feeling unwell.
- Report any unusual symptoms. Rarely, fainting or an allergic reaction can occur immediately after vaccination. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include: hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy), swelling of your face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing. Clinic staff are prepared to manage these events should they occur.
- Continue to follow Public health measures and the recommendations of local public health officials (wearing a mask, physical distancing and washing your hands).
- If you received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for your first dose, any of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech) can be offered where authorized for your age group for your next dose(s).
- Make an appointment or follow the instructions of the health care provider to ensure you receive the next dose at the right time. Receiving your next dose at the right time will ensure your safety and the best possible protection for you. It is important to complete your series with all recommended doses of the COVID-19 vaccine at the approved interval.

- Keep your immunization record in a safe place. You may register online on MyHealthNB to obtain a record of your COVID-19 immunizations. The paper Record of COVID-19 Immunization provided when vaccinated will continue to be the official record. Keep a copy and take a picture of it. The paper copy or picture of the copy can be used as proof of vaccination for entry to NB businesses.