



SARS-CoV-2 Vaccines (COVID-19)

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a 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. The virus that causes 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 vary from person to person, in different age groups and depending on the COVID-19 variant. Some people infected with the virus have no symptoms at all, while others have symptoms that range from mild to severe. Even people with mild symptoms may feel unwell for a long time after a COVID-19 infection. The most commonly reported symptoms can include any of the following: new or worsening cough; sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath or trouble breathing; fever; headache; fatigue; muscle or body aches; diarrhea; loss of smell or taste; headache.

Unvaccinated people are at much higher risk of COVID-19 infection and serious illness, including hospitalization and death, compared to vaccinated people.

What are COVID-19 Vaccines and what are their benefits?

COVID-19 vaccines protect against the SARS-CoV-2 virus (also known as COVID-19). Vaccines work with your immune system, so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to protect our families, communities and ourselves against COVID-19. Evidence indicates that the vaccines used in Canada are very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

A “monovalent” vaccine is the term used for the original COVID vaccines and “bivalent” is the term used for vaccines that targets both the original strain of COVID and the Omicron variant of concern (BA.1). Both original and bivalent vaccines provide significant protection against hospitalization and severe disease.

The following COVID-19 vaccines are approved for use in Canada:

- **Original mRNA vaccines:** Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) and Moderna (SpikeVax)
- **Bivalent mRNA vaccine:** Moderna Spikevax Bivalent Original/Omicron BA.1
- **Viral vector-based vaccines:** AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria)/COVISHIELD and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson)
- **Protein-based vaccine:** Novavax (Nuvaxovid)
- **Plant-based vaccine:** Medicago (Covifenz)

How is the vaccine given?

The vaccine is given as an injection into the upper arm in older children and adults; and into the thigh in infants.

Who should get a COVID-19 vaccine?

- Everyone is at risk of COVID-19. You should get a COVID-19 vaccine if you are aged 6 months and older. To find out which vaccine is right for you, follow the instructions of your health care provider, local pharmacy or Public Health office to ensure you receive the best protection for your age and health circumstances.

Which COVID-19 vaccine product is recommended for me?

Original “monovalent” mRNA vaccines are the recommended choice for all COVID-19 vaccines in a primary series. A bivalent mRNA vaccine is only used as booster dose and not used in a primary series. Depending on your age, some mRNA vaccine

Viral vector vaccines:

- Anaphylaxis
- Vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT), also called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS)
- Capillary leak syndrome (CLS)
- Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS)
- Immune thrombocytopenia (ITP)
- Venous thromboembolism (VTE)

Protein-based vaccines:

- Anaphylaxis

Plant-based vaccines:

- Anaphylaxis

Can I receive a COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

- Yes. When you are pregnant, you have a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. You are strongly encouraged to complete a primary series and receive a booster dose at any stage of pregnancy . Getting a COVID-19 vaccine lowers your risk of getting seriously ill from the virus.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding and have questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your healthcare provider, local pharmacy or Public Health to know which vaccine is best for you.

I am allergic to a component of the vaccine being offered to me, what should I do?

- If you are allergic to a component of the COVID-19 vaccine being offered, you will need to consult with your health care provider to determine the most appropriate actions for your situation.

How many doses of a COVID-19 vaccine do I need?

- It is recommended that you receive all of the doses that are offered to you and stay **up-to-date** with your COVID-19 vaccination.
- Depending on the vaccines you received and your health situation, talk to your healthcare provider, local pharmacy or Public Health who can advise you of the number of doses you require for best protection.
- COVID vaccines remain an essential first defense against serious illness and death from the disease.

What other information do I need and where can I find COVID-19 vaccine resources?

- Keep your immunization record in a safe place. Register online at [MyHealthNB.gnb.ca](https://myhealthnb.gnb.ca) 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.
- You can find COVID-19 vaccine useful resources at these trusted websites:
 - [Living with COVID-19 \(gnb.ca\)](https://www.gnb.ca/0000/living-with-covid-19)
 - [Get the facts | COVID-19 vaccines \(gnb.ca\)](https://www.gnb.ca/0000/get-the-facts-covid-19-vaccines)
 - [Immunize Canada](https://www.immunize.ca)
 - [COVID-19 Vaccines: Authorized vaccines – Health Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/covid-19/vaccines-authorized)
 - [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) – Health Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19)

For additional information, contact your family physician, local [Public Health office](#), or Telecare **811**.