



# COVID-19 VACCINES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

As COVID-19 immunization programs roll out across the world, it can be hard to separate fact from fiction. It's important to get your information from experts and credible sources such as BC's Centre for Disease Control and your doctor. To help you cut through the clutter, we have collected some of the more common myths and facts below.

## 8 Myths and Facts



**MYTH:** The vaccine isn't as safe as other vaccines, as it was developed so quickly.

**FACT:** Vaccines approved in Canada have followed the same extensive testing as every other vaccine. No steps were skipped. Faster funding and worldwide collaboration have meant the vaccines were able to be developed much more quickly.

The clinical trials and safety reviews actually took about the same amount of time as other vaccines.

This means the vaccines are as safe as other vaccines. They also provide excellent protection against the virus – preventing up to 95% of infections and serious illness.



**MYTH:** I can get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

**FACT:** It is not possible to get the COVID-19 virus from the vaccine. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized or in development use the live virus that causes COVID-19.

It is possible a person could be infected with the virus just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

**It takes about two weeks for the body's immune system to fully respond.**



**MYTH:** The risks of serious side-effects from the vaccine are worse than getting COVID-19.

**FACT:** Millions of people have received the vaccine across the world with very few side-effects.

People can experience some mild common reactions similar to other vaccines. These generally last one to two days. They include soreness, redness and swelling where the vaccine was given, tiredness, headache, fever, chills, muscle or joint soreness, and nausea.

These reactions are not an allergic reaction, which is rare, but signs that your body's immune system is responding – in a good way – to the vaccine.



**FACT:** There is light at the end of the tunnel. The sooner the majority of the population is vaccinated, the sooner we can get back to doing the things we love with our friends and families.



**4. MYTH:** I've had COVID-19 and so have antibodies that will protect me in the future. I don't need the vaccine.

**FACT:** Getting COVID-19 might offer some natural protection or immunity from reinfection from COVID-19, but it's not clear how long this protection lasts.

Because reinfection is possible, it is recommended that people who have already had COVID-19 get a COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccine offers you excellent protection, and will also help protect the people around you, especially those who are older, sick, or cannot get the vaccine.



**5. MYTH:** You shouldn't get the vaccine if you're pregnant or breastfeeding.

**FACT:** [The Canadian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology \(SOGC\)](#), the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#) and public health experts in B.C. all advise that pregnant and breastfeeding women can be offered the vaccine.

If you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or are breastfeeding, speak to your

health care provider about the risks and benefits of receiving the vaccine, especially if you are at high risk of getting COVID-19.



**6. MYTH:** I'm young and healthy, and unlikely to get very sick from COVID-19 so I don't need the vaccine.

**FACT:** Although it is true that older people are more vulnerable to illness or fatality, people of all age groups can be at significant risk from COVID-19.

Also, remember that the virus can spread very easily to other people so it's important to get vaccinated.



**7. MYTH:** I have mild to severe allergies so shouldn't get the vaccine.

**FACT:** Most people will be able to safely receive the vaccine. Only a very small group may need to avoid vaccination due to severe allergies to ingredients in the vaccine.

Talk to your doctor if you have had a severe allergic reaction to ingredients in vaccines in the past.



**8. MYTH:** Once I get the vaccine, I can stop wearing my mask.

**FACT:** Even after getting the vaccine, it will be important for everyone to continue wearing masks and to maintain their efforts to stop spread of the virus.

This is because, even though the vaccines are highly effective, we still don't know whether they prevent you from spreading the virus to other people. We need to ensure the safety of those who have not yet been vaccinated, or who cannot get the vaccine.

## Getting the facts

We recommend you regularly check for the latest updates on the vaccine at the BCCDC website, [bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine](https://bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine).