

# COVID-19 VACCINES

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: SAFETY AND EFFECTIVENESS

The COVID-19 vaccine is an important and effective step in combating the virus and keeping us all safe. Below are some answers to common questions you may have. Be sure you speak to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns.

### WHY SHOULD I GET THE VACCINE?

Vaccines help our bodies produce immunity to diseases like COVID-19. This means if you are exposed to the virus you can avoid becoming sick, or if you become infected, it prevents you from becoming seriously ill. Getting vaccinated also helps protect the people around you, especially those who are older, sick, or more vulnerable to the virus for any reason.



### IS THE VACCINE SAFE?

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.



### IS THE VACCINE EFFECTIVE?

The COVID-19 vaccines approved in Canada, requiring either one or two doses, provide excellent protection against the COVID-19 virus, preventing up to 95% of infections and serious illness. The more people who are vaccinated, the harder it is for COVID-19 to spread.



### DO I NEED TWO DOSES OF THE VACCINE?

Vaccines approved in Canada can require one or two doses, depending on their design. If you are receiving vaccines with two doses, make sure you follow up with your second, as it is meant to boost the effectiveness of the first dose for the longer term.



## ARE THERE ANY SIDE-EFFECTS?

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.

If you have concerns about any symptoms you develop after receiving the vaccine speak with your health care provider or call 8-1-1 for advice.

## CAN I GET COVID-19 FROM THE VACCINE?

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.



## ONCE I GET THE VACCINE, CAN I STOP WEARING MY MASK?

COVID-19 will become much less of a risk in our communities as more people are vaccinated.



But in the meantime, 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.

For more information about BC's restart plan, visit the [BC government website](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/diseases/communicable/covid-19/vaccine).

For more answers to your questions, visit the BCCDC website  
<https://immunizebc.ca/covid-19-vaccine-frequently-asked-questions>

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