



## COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet

mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

Please read this information sheet carefully and ensure that your questions have been answered by a health care provider before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

### What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This virus can spread from person to person through activities such as coughing, sneezing and talking. COVID-19 may also spread by touching something that has the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- sore throat
- runny nose
- sneezing
- new or worsening cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- temperature equal to or more than 38°C
- feeling feverish
- chills
- fatigue or weakness
- muscle or body aches
- new loss of smell or taste
- headache
- abdominal pain, diarrhea and vomiting
- feeling very unwell

Some people infected with the virus may have no symptoms at all, while others have symptoms that range from mild to severe.

### How do the vaccines protect against COVID-19?

- The vaccines cause our body to produce protection (such as **antibodies**) that prevent the COVID-19 virus from entering our cells to make us sick.
- Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty® and Moderna Spikevax® vaccines immunize Canadians against COVID-19. Both vaccines use a method called messenger RNA (mRNA) which helps our bodies make protection against the virus.
- 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.

### Who should receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccine can be provided to individuals 6 months of age and over if it has been at least 6 months from the previous COVID-19 vaccine dose or known SARS-CoV-2 infection (whichever is later).

Immunization is particularly important for those at increased risk of COVID-19 infection or severe disease, for example:

- Adults 65 years of age or older;
- Residents of long-term care homes and other congregate living settings;
- Individuals with underlying medical conditions that place them at higher risk of severe COVID-19;
- Individuals who are pregnant;
- Individuals in or from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities;
- Members of racialized and other equity-deserving communities;
- People who provide essential community services.

For previously vaccinated individuals, the recommended interval is 6 months from the last dose, and the minimum interval is 3 months from the last dose. Individuals/immunizers may consider delaying COVID-19 vaccination by 3 to 6 months in circumstances where recent test-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection is known for previously vaccinated individuals.

**COVID-19 vaccines may be given concurrently (i.e., same day), or at any time before or after non-COVID-19 vaccines (including live and non-live vaccines).**

How is the COVID-19 vaccine administered?

The vaccine is given as an Intramuscular (IM) injection in the upper arm.

Who should not receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

If you have had a serious or allergic reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine, you should not be vaccinated until it is determined to be safe by a health care provider. The following table lists potential allergens included in the vaccine.

Vaccine product (manufacturer)	Potential allergen included in the vaccine	Other products where the allergen may be found*
<b>Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty®</b> 6 months of age and older	Polyethylene glycol (PEG)  Tromethamine Tromethamine hydrochloride (Tris, Trometamol)	Bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrup, cosmetics, contact lens care solutions, skin care products, and as an additive in some food and drinks  Contrast agents, some oral and parenteral medications.
<b>Moderna SPIKEVAX® COVID-19</b> 6 months of age and older	Polyethylene glycol (PEG)  Trometamol Trometamol hydrochloride (Tris, Tromethamine)	Bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrup, cosmetics, contact lens care solutions, skin care products, and as an additive in some food and drinks  Contrast agents, some oral and parenteral medications.

Talk to your health-care provider prior to immunization with the COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- Have had an allergic reaction after a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine
- Have had an allergic reaction to any contents of the vaccine (ex: polyethylene glycol [PEG], Tromethamine [trometamol or Tris])
- Have had myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) or pericarditis (inflammation of the lining outside of the heart)
- Have had multisystem inflammatory syndrome (called MIS-C in children and MIS-A in adults)

Anyone with high fever should postpone immunization until recovered. Anyone with a mild illness can still receive the vaccine.

## Precautions

- **Please let the immunizer know if you;**
  - **have fainted or felt faint after receiving past vaccines or medical procedures.**
  - **have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting.**

Very rare cases of myocarditis and/or pericarditis following vaccination COVID-19 vaccine have been reported. These cases occurred more commonly after the second dose and in adolescents and young adults. Typically, the onset of symptoms has been within a few days following receipt of an mRNA COVID19 Vaccine.

- Individuals with a history of confirmed myocarditis (with or without pericarditis) after a dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may choose to receive another dose of vaccine after discussing the risks and benefits with their healthcare provider.

mRNA COVID-19 vaccines have been associated with very rare reports of Bell's Palsy following vaccination. Cases have been reported in a small number of people in Canada and internationally.

- Bell's Palsy is an episode of facial muscle weakness or paralysis. The condition is typically temporary. Symptoms appear suddenly and generally start to improve after a few weeks.
- Seek medical attention if you experience any combination of the following symptoms after vaccination: uncoordinated movement of the muscles that control facial expressions, such as smiling, squinting, blinking or closing the eyelid, loss of feeling in the face, headache, tearing from the eye, drooling, lost sense of taste on the front two-thirds of the tongue, hypersensitivity to sound in the one ear, inability to close an eye on one side of the face.

## What should I do right after receiving the vaccine?

- **Wait for at least 15 minutes** after receiving your vaccine. Longer waiting times of 30 minutes may be recommended if there is concern about a possible vaccine allergy. Though uncommon, fainting or allergic reactions can occur after vaccination. **Inform a health care provider** at the clinic if you feel unwell while waiting. If you have had an allergic reaction to any medication or vaccine given by injection or intravenous (IV) you will be observed in the clinic for 30 minutes after being vaccinated with mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Do not operate a vehicle** or other form of transportation for at least 15 to 30 minutes after being vaccinated or if you are feeling unwell.

## What are common symptoms that could be expected?

- Side effects can develop in the day or two after receiving the vaccine. **Most side effects are mild, do not last long and will resolve on their own.**
  - The most common side effect is pain or swelling where the needle was given. A cool, damp cloth or wrapped ice pack where the vaccine was given may help.
  - Other symptoms may include tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills or fever. Enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands) that last for several days may also occur.
  - Young children may experience irritability/crying and loss of appetite.
  - If needed, pain or fever medication (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen) may help with pain or fever. Check with your health care provider if you need advice about medication.
- Serious side effects after receiving the vaccine are rare. However, **if you develop any serious symptoms or symptoms that could be an allergic reaction, call 9-1-1 right away.** Symptoms of an allergic reaction include:
  - Hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy)
  - Swelling of the face, tongue or throat
  - Difficulty breathing
  - A fast heartbeat
  - Dizziness and weakness

If you have any concerns about the symptoms you develop after receiving the vaccine, contact your health care provider for advice.

## Things to remember

- You can download a copy of your [COVID-19 immunization record](#) from the PEI government's website.
- You can download the [CANImmunize](#) app to keep track of the vaccines you have received.
- **Any serious side effects after vaccination should be reported to your local Public Health Office or Health Care Provider.**

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