



What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine

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The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine will help everyone fight against COVID-19. You may have some concerns about the vaccine, or you may have heard some information you are unsure of. Here are answers to the most common questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.

How do we know the vaccine is safe and wasn't rushed?

As with all other medications for use in Canada, Health Canada has tested and proven that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective. The only difference is that the tests and clinical trials done on the COVID-19 vaccine were completed faster to help people sooner. Based on the results of the Health Canada tests, the Government of Canada has approved the COVID-19 vaccine for use in people 16 years of age and older (if they are healthy and able to be vaccinated).

Can the vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?

The vaccine is not a live virus. It will not make you sick with COVID-19.

Once I get the vaccine, will I be fully immune to COVID-19?

No vaccine is 100% effective at preventing illness. It takes time for your body to build immunity, so you will need two vaccine doses. The vaccines are about 94 to 95% effective in preventing COVID-19. Your body will reach its highest level of immunity within two weeks of your second dose. Even after you have had both doses, you will need to follow all safety measures to protect yourself and others against COVID-19, such as wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), washing your hands, and practicing physical distancing.

Are the vaccine side effects dangerous?

Serious side effects from the vaccine are extremely rare.

- About 90 out of 100 people do not experience any side effects.
- About 10 out of a 100 people experience mild side effects, such as soreness at the spot where the vaccine was injected.

These side effects are expected and are not serious, and are more likely to happen after your second dose of the vaccine. Allergic reactions happen very rarely. This is true of any vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccine uses mRNA technology. Can it alter my DNA?

The COVID-19 vaccine uses a method called “messenger RNA” (mRNA). The mRNA is like a code that tells the cells in your body to make a piece of the outer lining of the COVID virus, for a short time. This piece of virus cannot hurt you, but it is enough for your immune system to learn to recognize and be ready to fight off the virus. The mRNA in the vaccine cannot change your DNA.

If I've had COVID-19 before, do I need to get vaccinated, or am I already immune?

Even if you have recovered from COVID-19, you are encouraged to get vaccinated to make sure that you are fully protected.

Will it make a difference if I get the vaccine? Will I still need to follow all public health measures?

When you get the vaccine, you are helping to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community from illness and disease. If everyone gets vaccinated, it will save lives and help Canada recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. As more people get the vaccine, public health measures, such as physical distancing and lockdowns will likely begin to cease.