

COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet

How do the vaccines work?

Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna vaccines tell your body to make a harmless protein found in the virus and start building antibodies that can fight the real virus if you come in contact with it. The vaccines are given using a needle that goes into the muscle in your upper arm and the same vaccine is used for your first and second dose. The vaccines are expected to be 94-95% effective after two doses.

Can I get a vaccine?

You can get the Pfizer-BioNTech if you are **16 years of age and older** and the Moderna vaccine if you are **18 years of age and older**.

You **should not** get the COVID-19 vaccine if:

- You have ever had a severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of this type of vaccine. You can review the list of ingredients here: [Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine monograph/Moderna COVID-19 vaccine monograph](#)

You **should defer** getting the COVID-19 vaccine if:

- You have received another vaccine (not a COVID-19 vaccine) in the past 14 days.
- You have acute symptoms of a COVID-19 like illness; you should wait until your symptoms are resolving and have no fever for at least 24 hours.
 - If you live in a long-term care home and are in isolation with a positive diagnosis and your symptoms are resolving, you **can be** vaccinated.
 - If you live in a long-term care home and are positive for the virus and asymptomatic, you **can be** vaccinated if at least 72 hours have passed since your positive test.

You may be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine but should take precautions, such as 30 minutes of observation following the vaccine, if:

- You have a bleeding problem, bruise easily or use a blood-thinning medicine.
- You have a history of severe allergic reactions (e.g. anaphylaxis) to certain foods, pets, or latex.

Refer to the guidance document for special populations:

Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations.

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What do I do after I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Wait at least 15 minutes before leaving your appointment and inform a healthcare provider right away if you feel unwell.

You might feel some side effects such as:

- Pain at injection site, redness, swelling
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle pain or joint pain
- Fever, chills
- Swollen glands
- Diarrhea
- Nausea/vomiting

Serious side effects after receiving the vaccine are rare. However, should you develop any of the following adverse reactions within three days of receiving the vaccine, seek medical attention right away or call 911 if you are severely unwell:

- Hives
- Swelling of the face or mouth
- Trouble breathing
- High fever (over 40°C)
- Convulsions or seizures
- Very pale colour and serious drowsiness
- Other serious symptoms (e.g. "pins and needles" or numbness)