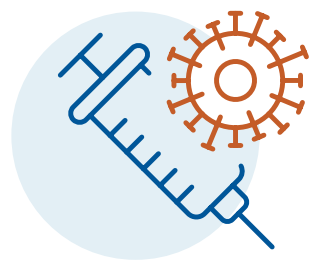


The facts about COVID-19 vaccines



WHAT IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

The vaccine helps your immune system produce antibodies that will keep you from getting sick if you're exposed to the virus.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINATION?

| THE VACCINES WORK | THE VACCINES WILL SAVE LIVES | THE VACCINES ARE SAFE |
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| <p>COVID-19 vaccines provide excellent protection against the virus that causes COVID-19 – preventing up to 95% of infections.</p> | <p>The vaccine protects you and the people around you, too. The more people that are vaccinated, the harder it is for COVID-19 to spread.</p> | <p>Just like all vaccines approved for use in Canada, the COVID-19 vaccines have been rigorously tested and carefully reviewed by Health Canada.</p> |

PROTECTING NORTHERNERS IS THE PRIORITY

COVID-19 immunizations began in Northern BC at the end of December 2020, and will continue to become more widely available. Northern Health strongly recommends that Northerners choose to get the vaccine to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities.

Even with the COVID-19 vaccines, we still need to follow all the orders and guidelines for public health and safety. This will help keep us all safe. For more information, visit www.northernhealth.ca.

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| <p>Can a COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?</p> <p>NO. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently approved in Canada contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.</p> | <p>Can I still catch COVID-19 after I get the vaccine?</p> <p>PERHAPS. After your first dose, it takes about two weeks for peak immunity to develop. For example, if you're exposed to COVID-19 on the day you're vaccinated, you might still get sick. All vaccines approved in Canada and available in BC are safe and effective and will help protect you against COVID-19.</p> | <p>Will the COVID-19 vaccine change my DNA?</p> <p>NO. The mRNA vaccines definitely can't change a person's DNA. There are three reasons we know this can't happen; to learn more, visit Immunize BC's COVID-19 FAQs page at immunizebc.ca/covid-19-vaccine-frequently-asked-questions.</p> | <p>Do the COVID-19 vaccines have human and animal cells or blood products?</p> <p>NO. Animal and human cell cultures may be used in the process of making some vaccines, but the vaccines themselves don't contain animal or human cells or tissue.</p> | <p>I've already had COVID-19; do I still need to get the vaccine?</p> <p>If you've been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should still get the vaccine once you've recovered. This is because you may not be immune to the virus that causes COVID-19, and you could get infected again. Please wait to get the vaccine until public health has told you that you no longer need to isolate. It's important that you wait the full isolation period, so you don't expose people at your vaccination clinic to the virus.</p> |
| <p>The COVID-19 vaccine was developed so quickly – are we sure it's safe?</p> <p>YES. It's much safer to get the vaccine than to get COVID-19. The vaccine was developed quickly, but no corners were cut, and all the correct processes were followed (as with any other vaccine) to ensure the vaccine is safe for all Canadians.</p> | <p>Can you still spread COVID-19 if you've been vaccinated?</p> <p>YES. The vaccine will protect you from getting sick with COVID-19, but you can still carry it and give it to others even if you were immunized. We're learning more about this, but in the meantime, we need to keep wearing masks and practicing physical distancing.</p> | <p>I don't know when my second dose will be available; is it still worthwhile to get the first dose?</p> <p>YES. Even if you only get the first dose, the vaccine is still about 80% effective after 2 weeks. In the short term, one dose of the vaccine protects as well as two. A second dose probably gives you longer-lasting protection. You shouldn't get your second dose sooner than 21-28 days after the first one, but waiting longer for your second dose won't reduce your protection.</p> | <p>Does the COVID-19 vaccine have side effects?</p> <p>PERHAPS. They might include soreness, redness and swelling at the spot where you got the injection; tiredness, headache, fever, chills, muscle or joint soreness; and nausea and vomiting. These reactions are mild and usually last 1 to 2 days.</p> <p>About 1 in a million people can have a reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue, or lips.</p> <p>This is why we ask you to wait 15 minutes before leaving, after any vaccinations.</p> <p>For the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD and Janssen vaccines, about 1 in 100,000 people can have blood clots and/or bleeding. This is very rare.</p> | |
| <p>Is the vaccine safe if I'm pregnant or breastfeeding?</p> <p>YES. The Canadian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, and public health experts in BC all agree that the vaccine is safe for pregnant and breastfeeding women. If you have questions, talk to your health care provider.</p> | <p>Why are the side effects sometimes worse for the second dose?</p> <p>This is because the vaccines are very good at stimulating your immune system (which is what we want them to do). When you get your second dose, the first dose has already primed your immune system. This means you might have a stronger reaction (e.g., headache, muscle aches, fatigue) than you did the first time. This means the vaccine is working.</p> | <p>How will I know when it's my turn to get vaccinated?</p> <p>Different groups will be eligible to receive the vaccine at different times, with the oldest British Columbians usually becoming eligible first. You can learn more about when different groups will be eligible to get the vaccine on the BC Government website: www.gov.bc.ca/covidvaccine.</p> <p>Contact information, hours, and call-in schedules for the Northern Health region, as well as step-by-step instructions on how to call to book an appointment for yourself or a loved one are on www.gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst, and on the Northern Health website.</p> | <p>The original gap between the first and second doses was 35 days. Where did the new 16-week gap come from? Isn't that too long?</p> <p>Many countries have delayed second doses and found that people still have a strong immune response against COVID-19. Studies around the world are showing that even one dose of COVID-19 vaccine provides very good protection. Health Canada and the Canadian National Immunization Advisory Committee support a longer delay between first and second doses. Because vaccine supplies are currently limited in BC, the time between first and second doses is being extended so that more people can get their first dose.</p> | |

For more information, visit immunizebc.ca/covid-19-vaccine-frequently-asked-questions and <https://www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-covid-19-vaccine>

