

Important Information about Myocarditis and Pericarditis for Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines

Please review the following information about the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis following immunization with mRNA vaccines.

There have been rare cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the lining around the heart) following vaccination with Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines reported in Canada and internationally. Some data suggests that this occurs more frequently following the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine compared to the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

Symptoms can include:

- shortness of breath
- chest pain or pressure
- unexplained sweating
- cough
- the feeling of a fast, pounding or fluttering heartbeat
- swelling in the ankles and feet

If you develop any of these symptoms, please seek immediate medical attention and make sure you mention you have received the vaccine.

Most cases have occurred:

- within a week of receipt of vaccine
- in adolescents and adults under 30 years of age
- more frequently in males compared to females
- more frequently after the second dose

The Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada in collaboration with provinces and territories, as well as international agencies and manufacturers continue to monitor the situation. Although follow-up is ongoing, the majority of individuals affected have responded well to conservative therapy, and tend to recover quickly.

People who have a history of myocarditis not related to mRNA COVID-19 vaccination should consult their health care provider for individual considerations and

recommendations. People previously diagnosed with myocarditis but who are no longer being followed by a medical professional for heart issues should receive the vaccine.

There are many potential causes for myocarditis and pericarditis. Myocarditis can also occur as a complication in people who are infected with COVID-19.

There are no data yet on myocarditis/pericarditis using an extended schedule or a mixed vaccine schedule (for example, AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD as dose 1 and Pfizer as dose 2).

This information may change as more evidence emerges.

As a precautionary measure, individuals who have experienced myocarditis or pericarditis following vaccination with a first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should delay the second dose in the vaccination series until more information is available

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization continues to strongly recommend that a complete COVID-19 mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) series should be offered to individuals who do not have contraindications to the vaccine.

The benefits of receiving COVID-19 vaccine outweigh the very small risk of myocarditis/ pericarditis in people of all ages.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization and Health Canada will continue to monitor the evidence and update recommendations as needed.

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For information visit: novascotia.ca/vaccine-plan