

## VACCINE INFORMATION AND AFTER CARE

# Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines for Adults/Adolescents Aged 12 and Up

Please read this carefully and ensure a health care provider answers your questions before getting the vaccine.

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

Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use messenger RNA (mRNA) which triggers a response to help our body protect itself against the virus. Bivalent mRNA vaccines protect against the original virus and the Omicron variant. mRNA COVID-19 vaccines offer short-term protection against COVID-19 infection and offer a high level of longer lasting protection against severe COVID-19 disease.

It takes approximately 14 days after receiving a dose of mRNA vaccine for your immune system to respond; it may take slightly longer in older individuals. Completing your primary series and receiving any further doses for which you are eligible helps prevent severe disease.

### What is known about the safety of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines?

There is now a large amount of real-world evidence showing that the original mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are safe, including for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or immunocompromised. Studies of bivalent mRNA vaccines show they are expected to be well tolerated. You cannot get a COVID-19 infection from the vaccine.

Rare cases of myocarditis (swelling of the heart muscle) and/or pericarditis (swelling of the lining around the heart) have been reported following vaccination with original mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. Please see the [Important Information about Myocarditis and Pericarditis](#) fact sheet for more information.

### How many doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should I get?

#### Primary series

Most people aged 12 and older require two doses of an original mRNA COVID-19 vaccine to complete their primary series. People who are moderately to severely immunocompromised should receive three doses to complete their primary series.

#### Doses given after completion of the primary series

Currently, a fall dose is available for people aged 12 and older who have completed their primary series and whose minimum interval since last vaccination has passed. You can receive this dose regardless of the number of booster doses you have already received.

### Which mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are available and what should I receive?

#### Primary Series

For people aged 30 and older, Pfizer original or Moderna original COVID-19 vaccine can be given for the primary series. For people aged 12 to 29, the Pfizer original COVID-19 vaccine is preferred for the primary series, because it has a lower rare risk of myocarditis/pericarditis compared to a full dose of Moderna original in this age group. Moderna original may be used for the primary series as an alternative to Pfizer for persons aged 12 to 29 who are moderately to severely immunocompromised after a discussion with their healthcare provider. Bivalent COVID-19 vaccines cannot be used for the primary series.

#### Doses given after completion of the primary series

A bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for the fall dose. Pfizer Bivalent (BA.4/5) is available for ages 12 and older. Moderna Bivalent (BA.1) is available for ages 18 and older. Both bivalent vaccines provide protection against the original virus and the Omicron variant. Original mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer or Moderna) are available for people who choose not to receive a bivalent vaccine. For more information, see the [Fall Dose Fact Sheet](#).



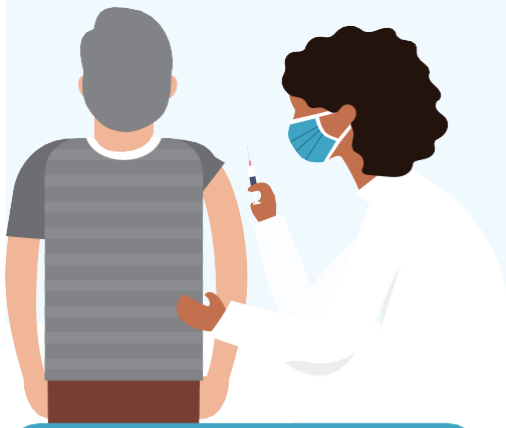
# Who can get the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines?

If you identify with any of the situations in the ★ MAY BE ABLE TO GET ★ column, you should discuss your personal risks of COVID-19 and potential benefits and risks of getting the vaccine with your doctor, nurse practitioner, specialist, clinic nurse or pharmacist familiar with your medical history before deciding whether getting the vaccine is right for you.

	CAN GET	MAY BE ABLE TO GET	SHOULD NOT GET
<b>Age:</b> Moderna original vaccine: 12 years of age and older Pfizer original vaccine: 12 years of age and older Moderna bivalent vaccine: 18 years of age and older (for doses after the primary series only) Pfizer bivalent: 12 years of age and older (for doses after the primary series only)	✓		
<b>Have you received any COVID-19 vaccines while living in another province/country?</b> If yes, please provide information to immunization provider.		★	
<b>Feeling unwell with symptoms that could be COVID-19</b>			✗
<b>Have had a COVID-19 infection but:</b>			
Could spread COVID-19 to others or still feel unwell from a recent infection			✗
<b>Are recovered from infection and have not yet completed your primary series:</b> It is advised to wait 8 weeks (or between 4 to 8 weeks if you are immunocompromised) before receiving your next primary series dose.			
<b>Are recovered from infection and have already completed your primary series:</b> Recommended to wait 168 days since your infection. Individuals who have a shortened interval of 120 days between doses after the primary series should be recommended to wait 120 since a COVID-19 infection. People who choose to receive their next dose sooner are advised to wait at least 3 months since infection, and these individuals must still wait the minimum interval since last vaccine.	✓		
<b>Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) or Adults (MIS-A)</b> People who have a history of MIS-C or MIS-A (regardless of immunocompromised status) should wait to receive their next dose of COVID-19 vaccine for at least 90 days since the onset of MIS-C or MIS-A or until they are clinically recovered, whichever is longer. These individuals should also follow the intervals after infection as listed above.	✓		
<b>Have received anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies</b> Need to provide date when received to health care provider. Each situation will be decided on a case-by-case basis to ensure you receive protection from the vaccine.		★	
<b>Did you experience myocarditis or pericarditis after an immunization with a COVID-19 vaccine?</b> Please see the <a href="#">Important Information about Myocarditis and Pericarditis</a> fact sheet for more information.		★	
<b>You should follow up with your healthcare provider before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, if you have a history of myocarditis or pericarditis and are still followed by a physician for related heart issues.</b>		★	
<b>Pregnant or breastfeeding:</b> You can review this <a href="#">video</a> for more information.	✓		
<b>Allergies:</b>	<b>Polyethylene glycol (PEG)</b> Polyethylene glycol (PEG) can rarely cause allergic reactions. It is found in products such as medications, bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrups, cosmetics, skin creams, dermal fillers, medical products used on the skin and during operations, and contact lens solution. Consultation with an allergist is recommended before you receive Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.		★
	<b>Tromethamine (trometamol or Tris)</b> is a component in contrast media, oral and parenteral medications. Consultation with an allergist is recommended before you receive Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.		★
	<b>Had a severe reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine, including allergic reaction.</b> Consultation with an allergist is recommended before you receive Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.		★
<b>Moderately to severely immunocompromised</b> (from disease or treatment)	✓		
<b>Was vaccinated in the past 14 days (not a COVID-19 vaccine)</b>	✓		

## In addition to the above information, tell the health care provider if:

- You have fainted or felt faint after getting past vaccines or medical procedures. Your health care provider may recommend that you get the vaccine lying down to prevent fainting.
- You have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting. This information will help the health care provider prevent bleeding or bruising from the needle.
- You have had an anaphylactic reaction to another vaccine or to an injectable medication or product. You can get the vaccine but will be observed in the clinic for 30 minutes after vaccination in case of an unexpected allergic reaction.



## Pfizer and Moderna Vaccines

# Everything you need to know before getting the COVID-19 vaccine

### What should I do before coming to the clinic for my appointment?

Wear a short-sleeve shirt or top with sleeves that are easy to roll up.

Have something to eat before coming to the clinic to prevent feeling faint while being vaccinated. It is also important to drink water and stay hydrated.

It is strongly recommended that you bring a clean well fitted mask to wear while you are at the clinic.

Bring your Nova Scotia Health card if you have one.



### When should I return for my next dose?

Completing your primary series and receiving any further doses for which you are eligible helps protect you against severe disease.

#### Primary Series

Most individuals need two doses to complete their primary series. You should get your second dose of mRNA vaccine 8 weeks after you received your first dose.

Individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised are recommended to receive 3 doses to complete their primary series. If you are moderately to severely immunocompromised, you should receive your second dose 28 days after your first and receive your third dose 56 days after your second.

#### Doses given after completion of the primary series

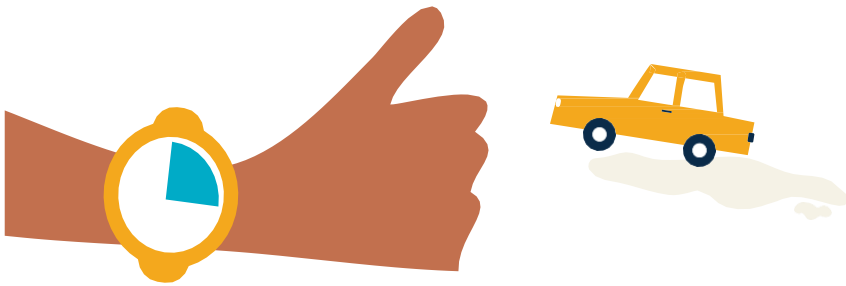
Individuals aged 12 and older who have completed their primary series are eligible for a fall dose. Most people need to wait 168 days since their last vaccine to receive the fall dose. Some groups at higher risk need to wait 120 days since their last vaccine. These groups include:

- Adults aged 70 and older
- Residents aged 12 and older of long-term care or senior congregate living settings
- Adults in or from First Nations communities who are 55 years of age or older
- African Nova Scotia adults who are 50 years of age or older
- Individuals aged 12 and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised

**Tell the person providing your COVID-19 vaccine if you experienced any side effects after previous doses.**

## Pfizer and Moderna Vaccines

# Everything you need to know after getting the COVID-19 vaccine



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

- Stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting the vaccine. You may be asked to wait for 30 minutes if there is concern about a possible vaccine allergy or allergy to another injectable medication.
- If you are asked to wait outside, let the health care provider at the clinic know if you do not have a warm, dry place to wait.
- Tell a health care provider at the clinic if you feel unwell while waiting. If waiting in your vehicle, honk your horn to get their attention.
- Use the hand sanitizer (alcohol-based hand rub) to clean your hands before leaving the clinic.

**In rare cases, people can faint or have an allergic reaction after getting a vaccine.**

*Symptoms of an allergic reaction include:*

**hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy)**

**swelling of your face, tongue or throat**

**or difficulty breathing**

*Clinic staff are prepared to manage these events if they happen.*

**Tell a health care provider at the clinic right away if you have any of these symptoms.**

Serious side effects after getting the vaccine are rare. However, should you develop any serious symptoms that could be related to an allergic reaction, **CALL 911 RIGHT AWAY.**

*Updated October 26, 2022*

# Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines

## What are the side effects of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine? What can I expect over the next few days?

People can have side effects in the two weeks after getting the vaccine with most of the common side effects occurring in the first few days.

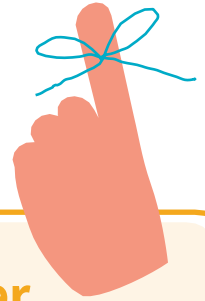
Although these side effects are not serious, they may make you feel unwell for about one to three days. They will go away on their own.

Side effects are expected and can show that the vaccine is working. Side effects include:

- Pain, swelling, or redness where the needle was given. Place a cool, damp cloth or wrapped ice pack over where the vaccine was given.
- Tiredness, headache, muscle and/or joint pain, nausea, vomiting, chills, fever, or enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands) in your underarm. Pain or fever medication (acetaminophen or ibuprofen) may relieve the pain or fever. Check with your healthcare provider if you need advice about medication.

Rarely, Bell's Palsy (sudden weakness or inability to move the muscles of the face) has been reported after mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. Seek medical attention right away if you experience facial weakness or dropping or other symptoms involving the face.

If you have concerns about the symptoms you develop after getting the vaccine, including symptoms of myocarditis/pericarditis, contact your healthcare provider for advice. Tell the person providing the next dose about any side effects you experienced after any previous doses.



## Things to remember

Even after your COVID-19 vaccine(s), continue following public health measures to keep yourself and others safe.

- ✓ clean your hands regularly
- ✓ stay home if you feel unwell

COVID-19 vaccines may be given at the same time as, or any time before or after other vaccines. A health care professional can help to determine the timing of COVID-19 vaccines.

**Keep this sheet or other immunization record in a safe place.**