Novavax COVID-19 vaccine for individuals aged 18 years and older

How does Novavax COVID-19 vaccine protect against COVID-19?

Novavax COVID-19 vaccine uses proteins like those found on the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus to trigger an immune response that helps the body build protection against COVID-19. Novavax COVID-19 vaccine also contains an adjuvant, which helps to make the immune response stronger. Novavax COVID-19 vaccine offers short term protection against COVID-19 infection and longer lasting protection against severe COVID-19 disease.

It takes approximately 14 days after receiving the vaccine for your immune system to respond; slightly longer if you are older or immunocompromised.

Who can receive the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine?

In Nova Scotia, only people over the age of 18 years can receive the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine. There is more information available about the safety and effectiveness of mRNA vaccines compared to the Novavax vaccine, so mRNA vaccines are preferred. However, people who prefer not to or are unable to receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine can receive the Novavax COVID-19 instead.

Is the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Novavax COVID-19 vaccines are considered safe for most people in the approved age groups. Right now, there is little or no information on the safety of Novavax COVID-19 vaccine when given to people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or in people who have autoimmune or immunocompromising conditions.

Before you receive the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine, tell your health care provider if:

- You have fainted or felt faint after getting past vaccines or medical procedures.
- You have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting.
- You have had an anaphylactic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine or any of its ingredients, or to another vaccine or injectable medication/product.
  – The main allergen in the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine is Polysorbate 80.
- You have been diagnosed with multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) or adults (MIS-A).
- You have a history of myocarditis and/or pericarditis or you were diagnosed with myocarditis and/or pericarditis following vaccination with a COVID-19 vaccine.

What are the side effects the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine?

Common side effects of COVID-19 vaccines include:

- Pain, swelling, or redness where the needle was given
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle or joint pain
- Fever or chills
- Nausea or vomiting

Other side effects of the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine are uncommon, rare, or very rare. They may include severe allergic reactions.

In addition, cases of myocarditis (swelling of the heart muscle) and/or pericarditis (swelling of the lining around the heart) have been seen following vaccination with Novavax COVID-19 vaccine. Right now, there is not enough information to determine if these cases were caused by the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine. For more information, a myocarditis and pericarditis fact sheet is available **online**.

Is it safe to receive other vaccines before, after or at the same time as my COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. You can receive COVID-19 vaccines before, after or at the same time as any other vaccines.

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

You should receive your primary series and any booster doses which are recommended for you. Your primary series are the first doses that build your body's baseline immune response. Booster doses are given after the primary series is completed and help to build back protection that may have decreased over time.

The number of doses recommended depends on which vaccine you receive, your age, and your other risk factors. For more information, check online or talk to your health care provider.

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COVID-19 VACCINE AFTERCARE

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? After you receive 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 allergic reaction.

- Tell a health care provider at the clinic if you feel unwell while waiting.

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

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

- Trouble breathing.

- Hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy).

- Swelling of your face, tongue, or throat.

Or if these symptoms occur when you are at home: CALL 911 RIGHT AWAY.

? What can I expect over the next few days?

Most common side effects occur in the first few days and up to two weeks after getting the vaccine and should 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.

- Seek medical attention right away if you think you may be experiencing a myocarditis/pericarditis – trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, unexplained sweating or cough, feeling of fast or abnormal heartbeat.

? 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.

For more information, talk to your health care provider or check online.

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