INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

Protecting yourself from COVID-19 with vaccines

Did you know?
Did you know there are vaccines available that can help protect you from getting sick from COVID-19?

A vaccine is a type of medicine that:

• helps your body fight a virus if you come in contact with it
• can stop you from getting very sick from the COVID-19 virus

It teaches your body how to fight COVID-19 in case you come in contact with the virus.

Are vaccines safe?
Yes. Vaccines have been tested many times to make sure they are safe.

The government also reviews information or facts about vaccines to make sure they are safe before they can give those vaccines to people.

The COVID-19 vaccine is a safe way to protect:

• you
• your family
• your friends
• and people in your community

If you have questions about getting a vaccine you should talk to your doctor for more information.
How do I get a vaccine?
A health care worker can give you a vaccine at a clinic or pharmacy.

A vaccine is given to you with a needle. It usually goes into your arm or shoulder.

It takes two weeks for the vaccine to work really well in your body.

Most COVID-19 vaccines that are available in Canada, require you to get two doses of the vaccine so they work the best.

This means that you will get one vaccine and then, four weeks to a few months later you will need to get another one.

You will need to get another vaccine up to four months after your first vaccine. You may be able to get it sooner if there is enough vaccine for everybody.

Why do I need two doses?
You need two doses so you can be really safe from the virus. The first dose will protect you a lot and the second dose will protect you even more and for a longer time.

You will be protected the most from COVID-19 two weeks after your second dose.
Your second vaccine appointment

Alberta Health Services or the pharmacy where you had your first dose will contact you when it is time to have your second dose. You may also get a phone call, text or email.

But you **do not need to wait to be contacted** to book an appointment.

You can book an appointment for a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine four weeks after you receive your first one.

How to get an appointment

You can book your vaccine:

- **at a pharmacy;**
- **online using the online tool:** [alberta.ca/vaccine](http://alberta.ca/vaccine);
- **you can call 811.**
Getting ready for your appointment

Once you have an appointment for your COVID-19 vaccination, there are things you must do to be ready.

- Make sure you bring your Identification with your birthdate to your appointment.
- You should wear a mask to your appointment. If you have a condition that makes it hard for you to wear a mask, just tell the workers when you arrive to your appointment.
- Wear a shirt that has sleeves that are easy to roll up or pull to the side so the nurse you can give you a vaccine in your shoulder or upper arm.

You can bring someone you trust with you when you go to get your COVID-19 vaccination. You can bring a:

- family member
- friend
- or a support worker.
Arriving at your appointment

When you arrive, you will be asked some questions to make sure you are feeling well and you haven’t been in contact with the COVID-19 virus.

After this you will get your vaccine.

The person giving you your vaccination has been trained.

They know how to give you your COVID-19 vaccination the right way.

They will:

• choose where to put the vaccine – it usually goes into your upper arm
• inject the COVID-19 vaccine with a needle
• they will ask you to wait about 15 minutes before you leave to make sure you are ok.

Some questions the workers will ask you when you arrive for your appointment are:

Have you been sick?

Have you had:

• a cough?
• a sore throat?
• a fever?
Have you been:

- feeling tired?
- finding it hard to breathe?

Have you been in contact with anyone who has COVID-19?

Have you had a COVID-19 vaccine before?

Have you had any other vaccinations in the last 14 days?

They will also ask you if you give your consent to have:

- the COVID-19 vaccination today
- a second dose of the vaccine later.

When you give your consent, you say it is ok for someone to do something.

You can choose to have the vaccination.

But you don’t have to have it if you don’t want to.

You should talk to your doctor if you have questions about getting a vaccine.
After you get a vaccine:
You will be asked to wait for 15 minutes after your vaccine to make sure you don’t have an allergy or a reaction to the vaccine.

If you can wear a mask, you will have to continue to wear it in public after you get the vaccine.

This is because it is still possible to catch COVID-19 after you have a vaccine and pass it to other people.

The vaccine helps you to not get very sick from COVID-19.
You should continue to wash your hands before and after you go out.
You should also continue to avoid getting together with friends and groups of people until most people have their vaccine.
Doing this will help keep you and others safe from catching COVID-19.