



Immunity & Antibodies

- Vaccines protect people before they come into contact with the disease. Vaccines work in such a way as to train the immune system to build antibodies in the same way as if you were exposed to the disease naturally. Vaccines trigger the body's natural immune response to provide protection against a disease, without the risk of getting the disease.
- You don't need to get sick to get antibodies and develop immunity. Vaccines let you skip the sickness and go straight to being protected. Natural infection from certain diseases can kill or seriously harm people before their body is able to develop a strong immune system.

Side Effects

- The risk of complications from getting the real disease is far greater than the risk of side effects from vaccines. The chance of having a serious adverse reaction to any vaccine, including the COVID-19 vaccine, are very rare.
- Like with other vaccines, some people have reported side effects after vaccination. The most frequent side effects were pain at the injection site, fatigue, and headaches. Some people also reported muscle pain, chills, joint pain and fever. The symptoms were generally reported as mild to moderate and resolved within a few days of vaccination.
- These types of reactions are considered normal following vaccination and are expected because of our body's immune response.
- No clear link has been shown between myocarditis (inflammation around the heart)/pericarditis (inflammation of the lining around the heart) and mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. The Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada, Public Health Ontario, and the Ministry of Health are closely monitoring reports of myocarditis/pericarditis following vaccination. The benefits of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines continue to outweigh the potential risk of myocarditis/pericarditis. For more information visit the [Porcupine Health Unit website](#).

Safety and Efficacy

- All COVID-19 vaccines are good, and all vaccines will help fight the COVID-19 pandemic.
- By getting the COVID-19 vaccine you are helping to protect yourself and the community from COVID-19 infection, severe illness, and the risk of hospitalization and death.
- All approved COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.
- The authorized COVID-19 vaccines will not make you sick or put you at risk for complications of the actual illness because they do not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus (the virus that causes COVID-19). Vaccines let you skip the sickness and go straight to being protected.
- All COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada have been through **Health Canada's rigorous approval process** which has determined that there are no major safety concerns and that vaccines are **safe and effective**. As with all medications and vaccines approved for use in Canada, there is **ongoing safety monitoring** of COVID-19 vaccines.

KEY COVID-19 INFORMATION

Second Dose of COVID-19 Vaccine

- All individuals 12 years of age and older, who have received their first dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least 28 days ago can now book an appointment for their second dose.
- Individuals who received dose one of AstraZeneca can receive dose two of an AstraZeneca or mRNA COVID-19 vaccine at a minimum 8 week interval.
- To find out more about second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, visit the Porcupine Health Unit website at [Second Doses of the COVID-19 Vaccine \(porcupinehu.on.ca\)](https://www.porcupinehu.on.ca) or call the health unit at 705-360-4819 (Timmins) or 1-800-461-1818.

Preparation for COVID-19 vaccine appointment

- Individuals attending a COVID-19 vaccine appointment must bring their Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card. If an individual does not have an OHIP card, another form of government-issued photo identification such as a driver's license, passport, Status Card, or other provincial health cards are acceptable. Individuals can still receive the vaccine if they do not have an OHIP card. If you do not have any identification, you can still go to the clinic and get the vaccine.
- The following documents from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care must be reviewed before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine:
 - [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet](#)
 - [What you need to know about your COVID-19 vaccine appointment](#)
 - [COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) (if applicable)
- COVID-19 vaccine immunization clinics are available throughout the Porcupine Health Unit district.
- Additional immunization clinics will continue to be announced. Information will include date, time, location, and eligibility. Clinics will be announced through local media, [Facebook](#) and on the [health unit's website](#). The health unit is also advertising clinics on local radios and television commercials.
- Vaccine appointments must be scheduled for the appropriate community.

Book an appointment to receive your first or second dose of COVID-19 vaccine through the [Porcupine Health Unit website](#), or by calling 705-360-4819 (Timmins) or 1-800-461-1818 or drop-in at any clinic to get vaccinated the same day.

Vaccine Eligibility

- It remains unknown how long someone is immune or protected against COVID-19 after testing positive and recovering from the illness. Since COVID-19 can cause severe health outcomes and that re-infection is possible, people who have already tested positive for COVID-19 should still be vaccinated.
- Anyone 12 years of age and older can book an appointment through the Porcupine Health Unit to get their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Individuals 12-17 years of age must book appointments in the Pfizer-BioNTech clinics. Pfizer is the only Health Canada approved vaccine for this age group.
- Some primary healthcare providers will be starting to offer mRNA COVID-19 vaccines and will be reaching out to their clients to schedule a vaccine appointment.



KEY COVID-19 INFORMATION



Post-Vaccination

- Even after getting the vaccine, it is important to remain vigilant and continue following public health measures. You should always:
 - Stay home if you have symptoms, even if they are mild.
 - Stay two metres apart from people you do not live with.
 - Wear a mask or face covering in indoor public spaces or any time physical distancing is not possible.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Sneeze and cough into your sleeve.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - Get tested if you think you have symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19.
- The vaccine is an additional tool in our fight against COVID-19. It is unknown how long immunity from the vaccine will last. In addition, not everyone is able to get the vaccine for various reasons. We must continue to follow public health measures to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- There is preliminary evidence that the COVID-19 vaccine may reduce asymptomatic infection, but the evidence is insufficient at this time to recommend stopping public health measures after vaccination.
- There is a still chance that you can become infected with COVID-19 after being vaccinated. For this reason, it is very important that we continue with public health measures even once vaccinated. When COVID-19 infections occur after vaccination, there is proof that vaccines reduce the severity of illness.

Individuals must stay home if they are sick and get tested even if symptoms are mild. An appointment can be booked by calling the local Assessment Centre ([Assessment Centres \(porcupinehu.on.ca\)](https://www.porcupinehu.on.ca)). If unsure where to call, contact the **Porcupine Health Unit at 705-360-4819 (Timmins) or 1-800-461-1818**.

Vaccine Interchangeability

- Updated recommendations from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) confirms that interchanging vaccines is safe and effective. This recommendation is based on current scientific evidence and NACI's expert opinion.

Additional Information

- [COVID-19: The Vaccines \(porcupinehu.on.ca\)](https://www.porcupinehu.on.ca)
- [Vaccines for COVID-19 - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Awareness resources - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)
- [Vaccine development and approval in Canada - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)
- [COVID-19: How vaccines are developed \(video\) - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)
- [What to expect when you get a COVID-19 vaccine | COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario](#)
- [Getting a COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario | COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario | COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario](#)