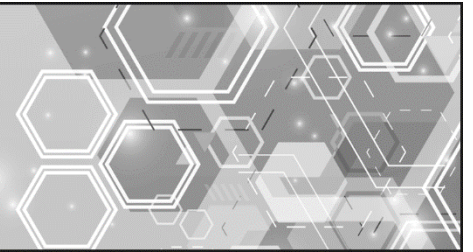




Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



COVID-19 Vaccines

COVID-19 is a viral infection that primarily affects the lungs. Some people may have a mild illness. Others may get very sick, including seniors or people with a pre-existing health condition. Very rarely, some children can get a serious inflammatory condition. The long-term effects of COVID-19 are not fully known. Some people are at greater risk of getting COVID-19 because of their work or living conditions.

How these Vaccines Work

Vaccines approved for use in Canada are the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Both these vaccines are mRNA vaccines. This means the vaccine tells the cells in our body to make a protein that is found specifically on the virus that causes COVID-19. These “spike proteins,” although harmless to us, will trigger our body to start making antibodies. Our new antibodies will protect us from being sick if we are exposed to the virus. The vaccine does not contain the virus and so it cannot give us COVID-19.

Both vaccines have been tested in large clinical trials to ensure they meet safety standards, and both have been licensed and approved by Health Canada.

Vaccination Process

Both vaccines require two doses. The Pfizer doses are given at least 21 days apart. The Moderna doses are given at least 28 days apart.

Vaccine Benefits

After completing two-doses, it may take another one to two weeks to achieve maximum protection against COVID-19. Currently, there is no information on the long-term protection with this vaccine. In trials for people 18 years of age or older without a history of COVID-19, the vaccine was 94% (Moderna) and 95% (Pfizer) effective 14 days after the second dose was received.

There is a small chance you may still get COVID-19 after being vaccinated. It is important to continue with public health measures such as physical distancing, wearing a mask, and staying home if you are sick. Health care and other staff must still wear personal protective equipment (PPE) even after they have been vaccinated.

Side Effects and Risks

Some people may experience side effects from the vaccine, but these will likely be moderate and resolve after a few days. Some of the symptoms are part of the body's response to developing immunity.
over...

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Common side effects reported in clinical trials for this vaccine include:

Very Common ≥10% (more than 1 in 10 doses)	Common 1%-10% (1 in 100 to 1 in 10 doses)	Uncommon 1% (1 in 100 doses)	Very Rare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pain at the injection site • headache • feeling tired • muscle or joint pain • fever or chills • swelling or tenderness under the armpit (only in Moderna vaccine) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redness & swelling at the injection site • nausea & vomiting (only in Moderna vaccine) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enlarged lymph nodes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serious allergic reactions such as anaphylaxis

In rare cases, serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) can occur. Allergic reactions can be treated and are usually temporary. Seek medical attention if you have trouble breathing, have hives, or swelling of the face and throat. Vaccine side effects will continue to be monitored as people receive the vaccine.

If you get a reaction to the vaccine, contact your health care provider who will report the side effect directly to public health. Public health will keep track of the reported side effects to make sure the vaccine continues to be safe.

Precautions

- Delay vaccination if you have a fever, are sick with COVID-19 symptoms, or have received a vaccine in the past 14 days.
- Avoid trying to get pregnant for at least a month after getting both doses of the vaccine.
- If you are on blood thinner medication, they will use a smaller needle and you will need to apply pressure for longer after getting the vaccine to reduce bruising.
- COVID-19 vaccines should not be given simultaneously with other vaccines. You should wait:
 - 14 days after receiving a **non-COVID-19 vaccine** before starting the COVID-19 vaccine series
 - 28 days after receiving the **second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine**, before getting a non-COVID-19 vaccine

Do not get this vaccine if you:

- have allergies to any vaccine ingredients, including polyethylene glycol; or
- have had a severe reaction to a previous dose of this vaccine.

Talk to your health care provider first if you:

- are pregnant or breastfeeding; or
- have a weakened immune system due to illness or treatment, or a bleeding disorder.

For more information talk to your health care provider or visit durham.ca/coronavirus

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