

For use at Alberta Health Services (AHS) immunization programs. Use this form when a parent or alternate decision-maker is **not** able to be with the person being immunized at an AHS immunization service. An alternate decision-maker could be an agent, guardian, specific decision-maker or co-decision-maker. The parent or alternate decision-maker should **complete this form** and **send it** with the person being immunized, to the AHS immunization service. Alternate decision-makers must also include a copy of the documents showing they are authorized as alternate decision-maker. These documents are required for this person to be immunized.

**Personal information for the person being immunized**

Name (Last, First, Middle) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (dd-Mon-yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Health Number (PHN) \_\_\_\_\_

**Health information for the person being immunized (If you need more space, use the other side of this form.)**

Does this person have any allergies, including allergies to any vaccine, medicine, or food? ☐ No ☐ Yes  
If yes, describe \_\_\_\_\_

Does this person have any chronic illness? (List all if more than one) ☐ No ☐ Yes  
If yes, describe \_\_\_\_\_

Has this person ever had capillary leak syndrome? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Has this person ever had immune thrombocytopenia? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If this person is under age 18 years, have they ever had multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C)?  
☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Not applicable

Is this person taking any medicine? ☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, describe \_\_\_\_\_

Is this person pregnant? ☐ No ☐ Yes Is this person breastfeeding? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Has this person had COVID-19 vaccine before? ☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Has this person ever had a side effect from COVID-19 immunization? ☐ No ☐ Yes  
If yes, describe \_\_\_\_\_

Has this person had myocarditis or pericarditis within 6 weeks of getting a COVID-19 vaccine? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Has this person had a COVID-19 infection? ☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Has this person had any vaccines in the last 4 weeks? ☐ No ☐ Yes  
If yes, list vaccine and date \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm that I have read the attached COVID-19 vaccine information. I know about and understand the risks, benefits, and common side effects of this vaccine. Any questions I may have had about this person getting this vaccine have been answered by calling the local public health office or Health Link at 811. I understand the information I have been given. I understand this consent is for all doses of the vaccine. I will contact the local public health office or the healthcare provider giving the COVID-19 vaccine if this person:

- has any changes to their health before getting any dose of the COVID-19 vaccine
- has a severe or unusual side effect after any dose of the COVID-19 vaccine (other than the expected side effects listed on the COVID-19 vaccine information sheet)

I consent to this person getting the (only select one):

- ☐ Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (primary series for ages 6 months and older, booster doses for ages 5 years and older)
- ☐ Moderna (SpikeVax) mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (primary series for ages 6 months and older, booster dose for ages 12 years and older)
- ☐ Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent (Comirnaty Bivalent) mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (booster dose for ages 12 years and older)
- ☐ Moderna Bivalent (SpikeVax Bivalent) mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (booster dose for ages 18 years and older)
- ☐ Either the Pfizer-BioNTech (original or bivalent) or Moderna (original or bivalent) mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (depending which vaccine is recommended for this person at the time of their immunization)
- ☐ Novavax (Nuvaxovid) COVID-19 vaccine (for ages 18 years and older)
- ☐ Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine (for ages 18 years and older)

I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time by calling the local public health office or healthcare provider giving the COVID-19 vaccine.

I confirm that I have the legal authority to consent to this immunization.

Printed name of person giving consent \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_

Other phone \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to person

- ☐ Parent (with legal authority to consent)  
☐ Co-decision-maker

- ☐ Guardian/Legal representative  
☐ Specific decision-maker

- ☐ Agent  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person giving consent \_\_\_\_\_

Date (dd-Mon-yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_

Alberta Health Services collects health information according to Section 20 of the Health Information Act (HIA). This information is used to provide health services, determine eligibility for health services, or to carry out any other purpose authorized by the HIA. If you have any questions about this, please ask the healthcare provider giving the immunization or contact your local public health office. If you do not know your local public health office, call Health Link at 811 to get this information.



## For Office Use Only

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# COVID-19 vaccines – mRNA (age 6 months and older)

## What are COVID-19 vaccines?

COVID-19 vaccines protect against the SARS-CoV-2 virus (also known as COVID-19). The virus causes an infection in the lungs and airways and is a type of respiratory illness. In some cases, the infection can cause problems with other organs or other parts of the body. Go to [ahs.ca/covid](https://ahs.ca/covid) to learn more about COVID-19.

The following COVID-19 vaccines are approved for use in Canada:

- **mRNA vaccines:** Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty and Comirnaty Bivalent) and Moderna (SpikeVax and SpikeVax Bivalent)
- **viral vector-based vaccines:** AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria)/COVISHIELD and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson)
- **protein-based vaccine:** Novavax (Nuvaxovid)
- **plant-based vaccine:** Medicago (Covifenz)

The Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Janssen, and Novavax vaccines are available in Alberta. For information about the protein-based and viral vector-based vaccines, read the vaccine information sheets on [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](https://immunizealberta.ca).

## Who should get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine?

Everyone is at risk of COVID-19. You should get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine if you are age 6 months or older. COVID-19 vaccines are free.

## Do I need a vaccine if I have already had COVID-19?

If you have already had COVID-19, it is not yet known how long your protection will last or how much protection you will have against variants. It is important to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you have already had the virus.

The vaccine may give you better protection if you wait a while after having COVID-19 and then get a vaccine. How long to wait depends on your health history, the number of doses of COVID-19 vaccine you have had, and your risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.

If you have had COVID-19 in the past, check with your healthcare provider about when to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

## What if my child is getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

Consent for a COVID-19 vaccine for children under age 18 years is provided by a parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian cannot be at the appointment, they can give consent in writing using the consent form at [ahs.ca/VaccineUnder18](https://ahs.ca/VaccineUnder18). In some cases, children under age 18 years may be able to give their own consent.

## How well do COVID-19 vaccines work?

How well the vaccines work against COVID-19 is different for each variant. COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to lower your risk of getting COVID-19 or getting very sick from it.

The mRNA vaccines give the best protection. The Moderna Bivalent and the Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent vaccines are the only vaccines that are specifically made to protect against Omicron variants, which are the strains that are currently spreading. The protein-based vaccine gives more protection than the viral vector-based vaccines. However, all the vaccines work very well to lower your risk of getting seriously ill and needing to be in the hospital.

## How many doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine do I need?

### Primary series

The primary series of a vaccine is the initial number of doses you need to get protection. The number of doses in your primary series depends on your age, health, and the type of vaccine you get.

If you get the Moderna vaccine, you need at least 2 doses. If you get the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, you need at least 2 doses if you are age 5 years or older and at least 3 doses if you are age 6 months to 4 years.

For some people, these doses may not give enough protection. You may need an extra dose to complete your primary series if you have a health problem that weakens your immune system. For example:

- You have had or will have an organ or stem cell transplant.
- You have kidney disease and need dialysis.
- You have acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

- You take certain medicines that weaken your immune system.

Studies have shown that an extra dose in the primary series may give better protection to adults with a weak immune system. In babies and children with a weak immune system, an extra dose may also give better protection, but research is still happening to learn more.

## Booster doses

A booster dose will help keep you protected during times when there will likely be lots of COVID-19 virus going around, such as fall and winter. You can get a booster dose 5 months after your last dose. Waiting 5 months helps the booster dose work better. However, if you are at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 because of a health condition or you live in a seniors care facility, such as a nursing home, you can get a booster dose 3 months after your last dose.

If you are age 5 to 11 years, you can get a single booster dose.

If you are age 12 years or older, you can get a booster dose after your last dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, whether it was a final dose of your primary series or a booster dose.

Talk to your healthcare provider about when you should get your booster dose.

Go to [alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine](https://alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine) to book an appointment for your booster dose.

## Can I get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

Yes, you can get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Research shows that mRNA vaccines are the safest type of COVID-19 vaccines to get during pregnancy, which includes the bivalent mRNA vaccines.

When you are pregnant, you have a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine lowers your risk of getting seriously ill from the virus.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding and have questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your healthcare provider.

## Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Go to [ahs.ca/covidvaccine](https://ahs.ca/covidvaccine) to find out where and when you can get a COVID-19 vaccine.

## Are there side effects from mRNA COVID-19 vaccines?

There can be side effects from mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, swelling, a hard spot, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired or have a headache
- a fever or chills
- body aches or sore joints
- pain in your arms or legs
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea), vomiting (throwing up), or loose stool (diarrhea)
- swollen lymph nodes
- swelling or feeling sore in your armpit or groin
- a reduced sense of touch or a feeling of numbness
- feeling dizzy
- a rash or hives

Children age 5 years and younger may also get upset easily or cry, have an earache, or may not want to eat.

Current information shows that there is similar risk of side effects after each dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. Research continues to find out more about the risk of side effects after additional doses.

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

### **What rare events have been reported after getting an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine?**

There have been very rare reports of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the lining around the heart) within 7 days of getting either the Pfizer-BioNTech or the Moderna vaccine. Most reported cases were mild and got better with treatment.

The inflammation can cause shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or a very fast or abnormal heart rate. Get medical help **right away** if you have any of these symptoms.

Available information shows that these rare events were reported more commonly:

- after the second dose
- in those age 12 to 29 years
- in males
- in those who got the original (not bivalent) Moderna vaccine

Research has shown that children age 5 to 11 years may also have a lower risk of these events after their primary series with Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine than people age 12 to 29 years.

In clinical trials for both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, there were no reports of myocarditis or pericarditis in children age 6 months to 5 years or in adults who got the bivalent vaccines.

Research is still happening to learn more about the risk of these events after a getting a bivalent vaccine and the risks in babies and children.

It is not known if having a history of myocarditis or pericarditis puts you at higher risk of having these rare events after a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor before you get a dose of COVID-19 vaccine if:

- You had myocarditis or pericarditis within 6 weeks of getting a COVID-19 vaccine.
- You have a history of myocarditis or pericarditis and you have questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Research is happening to learn more about the risks of these rare events. Your risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19 is much higher than your risk of having a rare event after these vaccines.

Go to [COVID-19 vaccine – Frequently Asked Questions on ahs.ca/topics/Page17389.aspx](https://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17389.aspx) for more information.

### **How can I manage side effects?**

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Children under the age of 18 years should **not** take Aspirin (unless your doctor has told you to take it) because it can cause serious health problems if taken within 6 weeks of a vaccine.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

### **What vaccine will I get for my primary series?**

You can get either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines for your primary series. You need to get all the doses in your primary series to have protection.

If you are age 6 months to 4 years, it will take 16 to 20 weeks to complete your primary series with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and 8 to 12 weeks with the Moderna vaccine. The Moderna vaccine is recommended for children in this age group with a weak immune system so they have protection as quickly as possible. If you are age 5 to 29 years, it is recommended to get the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. This vaccine has shown to have a lower risk of myocarditis and pericarditis in people age 12 to 29 years and may have a lower risk for children age 5 to 11 years.

If you can't get or don't want an mRNA vaccine, you can get the protein-based or a viral vector-based vaccine if you are age 18 years or older.

Usually you get the same vaccine for all your doses. If your first-dose vaccine is not available or you cannot have it, you can get a different COVID-19 vaccine for your next dose. Whichever vaccine you get to complete your primary series protects you against COVID-19. Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccine is best for you. Go to [ahs.ca/seconddose](https://www.ahs.ca/seconddose) for more information.

### **What vaccine will I get for my booster dose?**

The vaccine you can get for your booster dose depends on your age:

- Age 5 to 11 years: Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine
  - Age 12 to 17 years: Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent vaccine
  - Age 18 years or older: Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent or Moderna Bivalent vaccine
- If you are eligible for a bivalent vaccine but you cannot get it or do not want it, you can get an original mRNA vaccine for your booster dose.
- If you cannot get or do not want an original mRNA vaccine for a booster dose, you can get the protein-based vaccine if you are age 18 years or older.
- The mRNA vaccine is not licensed (approved for use) for more than 2 doses in all cases. But vaccine experts support getting more than 2 doses of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine in the following situations, called "off-label use":
- You get a 3-dose primary series of Moderna vaccine.
  - You are age 5 years or older and get a 3-dose primary series of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.
  - You get a 4-dose primary series of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.
  - You are age 12 to 17 years and you get the original Moderna vaccine as a booster dose.
  - You are age 12 to 15 years and you get the original Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine as a booster dose.
  - You get a booster dose of an original mRNA vaccine sooner than 6 months after your last dose.
  - You get a second booster dose of an original mRNA vaccine.
  - You get a Moderna Bivalent booster dose sooner than 4 months after your last dose.

Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccine you can get and when to have your doses.

### **What vaccine is recommended for people with a weak immune system?**

Research has shown mRNA vaccines provide the best protection for people with a weak immune system. Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccine is best for you.

### **What if I had or am getting another type of vaccine?**

You can get most vaccines at the same time as, any time before, or any time after an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, including routine vaccines and the influenza vaccine. However, certain vaccines have a waiting period. If you had another vaccine in the last 4 weeks, check with your healthcare provider about when you can get the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Who should not get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine?**

You may not be able to get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to any part of the vaccine
- had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it
- are under age 6 months

Always tell your healthcare provider if you have allergies or if you have had a side effect from a vaccine in the past.

Check with your healthcare provider about when you can get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- had COVID-19 in the past
- are under age 18 years and have a history of multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C)

Be sure to talk to your doctor **before** you get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- have a weak immune system (because of a medicine you take or a health problem)
- have an autoimmune disorder (like rheumatoid arthritis or lupus)
- have had a stem cell or organ transplant
- have a history of myocarditis or pericarditis within 6 weeks of getting a dose of COVID-19 vaccine



# COVID-19 vaccines - protein-based (age 18 years and older)

## What are COVID-19 vaccines?

COVID-19 vaccines protect against the SARS-CoV-2 virus (also known as COVID-19). The virus causes an infection in the lungs and airways and is a type of respiratory illness. In some cases, the infection can cause problems with other organs or other parts of the body. Go to [ahs.ca/covid](https://ahs.ca/covid) to learn more about COVID-19.

The following COVID-19 vaccines are approved for use in Canada:

- **mRNA vaccines:** Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty and Comirnaty Bivalent) and Moderna (SpikeVax and SpikeVax Bivalent)
- **viral vector-based vaccines:** AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria)/COVISHIELD and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson)
- **protein-based vaccine:** Novavax (Nuvaxovid)
- **plant-based vaccine:** Medicigo (Covifenz)

The Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Janssen, and Novavax vaccines are available in Alberta. For information about the mRNA and viral vector-based vaccines, read the vaccine information sheets on [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](https://immunizealberta.ca).

## Who can get the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine?

Everyone is at risk of COVID-19. You can get a protein-based COVID-19 vaccine if you are age 18 years or older and you cannot have or do not want an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 vaccines are free.

## Do I need a vaccine if I have already had COVID-19?

If you have already had COVID-19, it is not yet known how long your protection will last or how much protection you will have against variants. It is important to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you have already had the virus.

The vaccine may give you better protection if you wait a while after having COVID-19 and then get a vaccine. How long to wait depends on your health history, the number of doses of COVID-19 vaccine you have had, and your risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.

If you have had COVID-19 in the past, check with your healthcare provider about when to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

## How well do COVID-19 vaccines work?

How well the vaccines work against COVID-19 is different for each variant. COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to lower your risk of getting COVID-19 or getting very sick from it.

The mRNA vaccines give the best protection. The Moderna Bivalent and the Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent vaccines are the only vaccines that are specifically made to protect against Omicron variants, which are the strains that are currently spreading. The protein-based vaccine gives more protection than the viral vector-based vaccines. However, all the vaccines work very well to lower your risk of getting seriously ill and needing to be in the hospital.

## How many doses of the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine do I need?

### Primary series

You need at least 2 doses of the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine. These doses are called your primary series.

For some people, 2 doses may not give enough protection. You may need a third dose to complete your primary series if you have a health problem that weakens your immune system. For example:

- You have had or will have an organ or stem cell transplant.
- You have kidney disease and need dialysis.
- You have acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).
- You take certain medicines that weaken your immune system.

Studies have shown that a third dose may provide better protection for adults with a weak immune system.

## Booster doses

A booster dose will help keep you protected during times when there will likely be lots of COVID-19 virus going around, such as fall and winter.

You can get a booster dose at least 5 months after your last dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, whether it was the final dose of your primary series or a booster dose.

You may get your booster dose at least 3 months after your last dose if you are at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 because you have a health condition or you live in a seniors care facility, such as a nursing home.

Talk to your healthcare provider about when you should get your booster dose.

Go to [alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine](https://alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine) to book an appointment for your booster dose.

## Can I get the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

Yes, you can get a protein-based COVID-19 vaccine if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. However, research shows that mRNA vaccines are the safest type of COVID-19 vaccines to get during pregnancy. There is more to learn about getting a protein-based COVID-19 vaccine when you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

When you are pregnant, you have a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine lowers your risk of getting seriously ill from the virus.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, it is recommended that you talk to your healthcare provider before getting a protein-based COVID-19 vaccine.

## Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Go to [ahs.ca/covidvaccine](https://ahs.ca/covidvaccine) to find out where and when you can get a COVID-19 vaccine.

## Are there side effects from the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine?

There can be side effects from the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, swelling, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- headache, feeling tired or unwell
- a fever or chills
- body aches, sore joints, or pain in your legs or arms
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea) or vomiting (throwing up)

Current information shows that you are more likely to have these side effects after your second dose of the protein-based vaccine.

Research continues to find out more about the risk of side effects after additional doses.

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

### **What rare events have been reported after getting the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine?**

There have been very rare reports of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the lining around the heart) shortly after getting the protein-based vaccine. The reported cases were mild and got better with treatment. It is still not known if these events were caused by the vaccine, and research is happening to learn more about the risk of these rare events after getting the protein-based vaccine.

The inflammation can cause shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or a very fast or abnormal heart rate. Get medical help **right away** if you have any of these symptoms.

It is not known if having a history of myocarditis or pericarditis puts you at higher risk of having these rare events after a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor before you get a dose of COVID-19 vaccine if:

- You had myocarditis or pericarditis within 6 weeks of getting a COVID-19 vaccine.
- You have a history of myocarditis or pericarditis and you have questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Your risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19 is much higher than your risk of having a rare event after these vaccines.

Go to [COVID-19 vaccine – Frequently Asked Questions on ahs.ca/topics/Page17389.aspx](https://ahs.ca/topics/Page17389.aspx) for more information.

### **How can I manage side effects?**

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

### **What vaccine will I get for my primary series?**

You will get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for your primary series. If you cannot get or do not want that type of vaccine, you can get the protein-based or a viral vector-based vaccine if you are age 18 years or older.

Usually you get the same vaccine for all your doses. If your first-dose vaccine is not available or you cannot have it, you can get a different COVID-19 vaccine for your next dose.

Whichever vaccine you get to complete your primary series protects you against COVID-19.

Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccine is best for you.

Go to [ahs.ca/seconddose](https://ahs.ca/seconddose) for more information.

### **What vaccine will I get for my booster dose?**

You will get an mRNA vaccine for your booster dose.

If you cannot get or do not want an mRNA vaccine, you can get the protein-based vaccine if you are age 18 years or older.

The protein-based vaccine is licensed (approved for use) as a 2 dose primary series and a first booster dose. But vaccine experts support getting more doses of a protein-based vaccine in the following situations, called “off-label use”:

- You get a 3-dose primary series.
- You get a booster dose sooner than 6 months after your last dose.
- You get more than 1 booster dose.

Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccine you can get and when to have your doses.

### **What vaccine is recommended for people with a weak immune system?**

Research has shown mRNA vaccines provide the best protection for people with a weak immune system. Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccine is best for you.

### **What if I had or am getting another type of vaccine?**

You can get most vaccines at the same time as, any time before, or any time after the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine. However, certain vaccines have a waiting period. If you had another vaccine in the last 2 weeks, check with your healthcare provider about when you can get the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Who should not get the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine?**

You may not be able to get the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to any part of the vaccine
- had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it
- are under age 18 years

Always tell your healthcare provider if you have allergies or if you have had a side effect from a vaccine in the past.

Check with your healthcare provider about when you can get the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine if you had COVID-19 in the past.

Be sure to talk to your doctor **before** you get the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- have a weak immune system (because of a medicine you take or a health problem)
- have an autoimmune disorder (like rheumatoid arthritis or lupus)
- have had a stem cell or organ transplant
- have a history of myocarditis or pericarditis within 6 weeks of getting a dose of COVID-19 vaccine

### **For more information about immunization**



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to **ImmunizeAlberta.ca**



Scan the QR code or go to **MyHealth.Alberta.ca**

# COVID-19 vaccines - viral vector-based (ages 18 years and older)

## What are COVID-19 vaccines?

COVID-19 vaccines protect against the SARS-CoV-2 virus (also known as COVID-19). The virus causes an infection in the lungs and airways and is a type of respiratory illness. In some cases, the infection can cause problems with other organs or other parts of the body. Go to [ahs.ca/covid](https://ahs.ca/covid) to learn more about COVID-19.

The following COVID-19 vaccines are approved for use in Canada:

- **mRNA vaccines:** Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty and Comirnaty Bivalent) and Moderna (SpikeVax and SpikeVax Bivalent)
- **viral vector-based vaccines:** AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria)/ COVISHIELD and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson)
- **protein-based vaccine:** Novavax (Nuvaxovid)
- **plant-based vaccine:** Medicago (Covifenz)

The Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Janssen, and Novavax vaccines are available in Alberta. For information about the mRNA and protein-based vaccines, read the vaccine information sheets on [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](https://immunizealberta.ca).

## Who can get a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine?

Everyone is at risk of COVID-19. You can get a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine if you are age 18 years or older and you cannot have or do not want an mRNA or protein-based COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 vaccines are free.

## Do I need a vaccine if I have already had COVID-19?

If you have already had COVID-19, it is not yet known how long your protection will last or how much protection you will have against variants. It is important to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you have already had the virus.

The vaccine may give you better protection if you wait a while after having COVID-19 and then get a vaccine. How long to wait depends on your health history, the number of doses of COVID-19 vaccine you have had, and your risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.

If you have had COVID-19 in the past, check with your healthcare provider about when to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

## How well do COVID-19 vaccines work?

How well the vaccines work against COVID-19 is different for each variant. COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to lower your risk of getting COVID-19 or getting very sick from it. The mRNA vaccines give the best protection. The Moderna Bivalent and the Pfizer-BioNTech Bivalent vaccines are the only vaccines that are specifically made to protect against Omicron variants, which are the strains that are currently spreading. The protein-based vaccine gives more protection than the viral vector-based vaccines. However, all the vaccines work very well to lower your risk of getting seriously ill and needing to be in the hospital.

## How many doses of viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine do I need?

### Primary series

If you got the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine (no longer available in Alberta), you need a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. These doses are called your primary series.

If you get the Janssen vaccine, at this time you need only 1 dose to complete your primary series. However, it is likely that in the future you will need a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine for better protection and to complete your primary series.

For some people, 2 doses may not give enough protection. You may need a third dose to complete your primary series if you have a health problem that weakens your immune system. For example:

- You have had or will have an organ or stem cell transplant.
- You have kidney disease and need dialysis.
- You have acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).
- You take certain medicines that weaken your immune system.

Studies have shown that a third dose may provide better protection for adults with a weak immune system.

### Booster doses

A booster dose will help keep you protected during times when there will likely be lots of COVID-19 virus going around, such as fall and winter. When you can get your booster dose depends on what vaccine you get:

- If you get Janssen vaccine for your booster dose, you can get it at least 2 months after your primary series.
- If you get an mRNA or protein-based vaccine for your first booster dose, you can get it at least 5 months after your last dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, whether it was a final dose of your primary series or a booster dose.

If you are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, you can have the mRNA booster dose earlier than 5 months.

Talk to your healthcare provider about when you should get your booster dose. Go to [alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine](https://alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine) to book an appointment for your booster dose.

## Can I get a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

Yes, you can get a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. However, research shows that mRNA vaccines are the safest type of COVID-19 vaccines to get during pregnancy. There is more to learn about getting a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine when you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

When you are pregnant, you have a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine lowers your risk of getting seriously ill from the virus.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, it is recommended that you talk to your healthcare provider before getting a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine.

## Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Go to [ahs.ca/covidvaccine](https://ahs.ca/covidvaccine) to find out where and when you can get a COVID-19 vaccine.

## Are there side effects from the viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine?

There can be side effects from the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, swelling, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired
- a headache
- a fever or chills
- body aches or sore joints
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea)

Current information shows that there is a similar risk of side effects after a first, second, or additional dose of a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine. Research continues to find out more about the risk of side effects after additional doses.

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

## What rare events have been reported after getting the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD or the Janssen vaccines?

Research is still happening to learn more about the risk of rare events after getting the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD (no longer available in Alberta) or



Janssen vaccines. It is not yet known if having a history of certain health problems puts you at a higher risk of rare events after having these vaccines. Your risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19 is much higher than your risk of having a rare event after these vaccines.

Go to [COVID-19 vaccine – Frequently Asked Questions on ahs.ca/topics/Page17389.aspx](https://ahs.ca/topics/Page17389.aspx) for more information.

### **Blood clots, low platelets, bleeding**

There have been very rare reports of blood clots, low levels of platelets (these help your blood to clot), and bleeding after getting the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD or the Janssen vaccines.

These events happened 4 to 28 days after getting the vaccine. The risk of these events after getting the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine is about:

- 1 in 26,000 to 1 in 100,000 after the first dose
- 1 in 520,000 after the second dose

The risk of these events after getting the Janssen vaccine is about 1 in 300,000.

Talk to your healthcare provider if you have a condition that puts you at risk for blood clots or if you have ever had immune thrombocytopenia (ITP). ITP is when your immune system attacks the blood cells you need for normal blood clotting and causes bleeding.

If you have any of the following symptoms within 42 days of being immunized, get medical help **right away**:

- trouble talking or moving a part of your body
- shortness of breath
- chest pain
- severe swelling, pain, or a colour change in your arm or leg
- stomach pain that does not go away
- a severe headache that does not go away
- blurry vision
- confusion
- seizures
- bruising or bleeding that is not normal for you

### **Capillary leak syndrome**

There have been very rare reports of capillary leak syndrome (CLS) within the first few days after getting the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD or Janssen vaccines. In some reported cases, the person had a history of CLS. CLS is a serious condition that causes fluid to leak from the small blood vessels (capillaries). This causes sudden swelling of the arms and legs, sudden weight gain, and low blood pressure causing you to feel faint. CLS can cause death. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any history of CLS. Get medical help **right away** if you have any of these symptoms.

### **Guillain-Barre syndrome**

There have been very rare reports of Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) up to 42 days after getting the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD or Janssen vaccines. GBS is a serious condition that causes pain or numbness, muscle weakness, and in severe cases, paralysis. Most people fully recover from GBS but some may continue to have symptoms. GBS can cause death. The risk of GBS after getting either AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD or Janssen vaccine is about 1 in 100,000. Get medical help **right away** if you have any of these symptoms.

### **How can I manage side effects?**

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

### **What vaccine will I get for my primary series?**

You will get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for your primary series. If you cannot get or do not want this type of vaccine you can get the protein-based or the viral vector-based vaccine if you are age 18 years or older.

Usually you get the same vaccine for all your doses. If your first-dose vaccine is not available or you cannot have it, you can get a different COVID-19 vaccine for your next dose.

Whichever vaccine you get to complete your primary series protects you against COVID-19.

Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccine is best for you.

Go to [ahs.ca/seconddose](https://ahs.ca/seconddose) for more information.

### **What vaccine will I get for my booster dose?**

You will get an mRNA vaccine for your booster dose.

If you cannot get or do not want an mRNA vaccine, you can get the protein-based vaccine if you are age 18 years or older.

If you do not want an mRNA or a protein-based vaccine and you have only had 1 dose of Janssen vaccine (no other COVID-19 vaccines), you can get Janssen for your first booster dose if you are age 18 years or older. You cannot get a Janssen vaccine for a second booster dose.

The Janssen vaccine is not licensed (approved for use) for more than 2 doses. Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccine you can get and when to have your doses.

### **What vaccine is recommended for people with a weak immune system?**

Research has shown mRNA vaccines provide the best protection for people with a weak immune system. Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccine is best for you.

### **What if I had or am getting another type of vaccine?**

You can get most vaccines at the same time as, any time before, or any time after a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine. However, certain vaccines have a waiting period. If you had another vaccine in the last 2 weeks, check with your healthcare provider about when you can get the protein-based COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Who should not get a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine?**

You may not be able to get a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to any part of the vaccine
- had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it
- have a history of capillary leak syndrome (CLS)
- are under age 18 years

Always tell your healthcare provider if you have allergies or if you have had a side effect from a vaccine in the past.

Check with your healthcare provider about when you can get a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine if you had COVID-19 in the past.

Be sure to talk to your doctor **before** you get a viral vector-based COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- have a weak immune system (because of a medicine you take or a health problem)
- have an autoimmune disorder (like rheumatoid arthritis or lupus)
- have had a stem cell or organ transplant
- have a history of immune thrombocytopenia (ITP)
- are at higher risk of blood clots

### **For more information about immunization**



Call Health Link at 811



Scan the QR code or go to [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](https://ImmunizeAlberta.ca)



Scan the QR code or go to [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://MyHealth.Alberta.ca)