



BC Centre for Disease Control

## Vaccine Considerations

Everyone who is eligible can be safely vaccinated against COVID-19, although a very small number of people may need to delay vaccination if they have severe allergies to parts of the vaccine.

Last updated: May 12, 2022

Very rarely a person may need to delay vaccination because of severe allergies, illness or severe reaction after the first dose. If you have concerns, discuss with your health care provider about how you can safely receive the vaccines.

Review the HealthLinkBC Files on the:

- [COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines](#)
- [COVID-19 Protein Subunit Vaccine](#)
- [COVID-19 Viral Vector Vaccines](#)

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### Timing with other vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines can be safely given with other vaccines. This includes the Inactivated vaccine. This includes the Inactivated vaccine.

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or



If you are getting a COVID-19 vaccine you do not need to delay getting an influenza vaccine.

It's especially important to protect yourself against respiratory viruses during cold and flu season. If you get any two vaccines at the same time or close together the healthcare provider will usually administer the vaccines in different arms/limbs.

## Pregnancy or breastfeeding

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine if you are pregnant, planning to get pregnant or breastfeeding is the safest choice to protect you from COVID-19.

### You're pregnant, breastfeeding or thinking about getting pregnant. Should you get a COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all people 12 years of age and older, including people who are pregnant, breastfeeding or who may become pregnant.

Pregnant people are at increased risk of serious illness and complications from COVID-19 infection. Vaccines can drastically reduce this risk and can be given safely at any time while trying to conceive, during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

Evidence from around the world continues to grow and has not found any safety concerns for pregnant or breastfeeding people who were vaccinated or for their babies. Studies have shown that pregnant people who get a COVID-19 vaccine receive the same levels of protection that non-pregnant people do, and that this protection can be passed on to your baby.



Open: [COVID-19 vaccine planning guide for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding](#)

This document is available in:

[Українська \(Ukrainian\)](#) | [Русский \(Russian\)](#)

The [Canadian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology \(SOGC\)](#), the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) and public health experts in B.C. all agree that people who are pregnant and breastfeeding should get the vaccine.

## Risk of COVID-19 in pregnancy

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Pregnant people are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 infection and can be vaccinated at any time during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

- If you are unvaccinated and infected with COVID-19 during your pregnancy, you are three times more likely to end up in the intensive care unit (ICU) than those infected with COVID-19 who are not pregnant.
- Preterm birth and admission of baby to neonatal intensive care units have been shown to be more common among pregnant people with COVID-19.

### **Important information**

- There is currently no known serious risk (such as an increased risk of miscarriage or possible birth defect) of getting a COVID-19 vaccine while pregnant or breastfeeding (or providing expressed human milk) to either the person being vaccinated or the child.
- There is no need to avoid starting or stopping breastfeeding if you get a COVID-19 vaccine.
- The vaccine helps your body to produce antibodies that will protect you from getting sick if you are exposed to COVID-19. These protective antibodies pass into your milk and may also protect your child from infection.

For more information, refer to the [COVID-19 vaccine planning guide](#) for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

### **Fertility and menstrual cycle**

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There is misinformation circulating about COVID-19 vaccines and infertility. COVID-19 vaccines do not cause infertility and there is no scientific reason or biological way they would impact fertility.

Some people have reported changes to their menstrual cycle following vaccination. However, it is important to know that a number of factors can impact the menstrual cycle, including sleep, stress, infection, diet and exercise. In fact, getting COVID-19 itself may impact the menstrual cycle, as more than 35% of individuals noted changes in their menstrual cycle after COVID-19 infection.

While studies are taking place to understand this potential impact, we know that other vaccines have not impacted the menstrual cycle. Read more from the [Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada](#).

If you are pregnant or thinking of getting pregnant, getting vaccinated with all recommended doses of a COVID-19 vaccine is the safest way to protect yourself and your baby. People who are pregnant are at increased risk of experiencing a severe case of COVID-19 with serious outcomes for them and their baby, including preterm birth. Learn more about [pregnancy and vaccination](#).

If you have questions, and you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or are breastfeeding, please [read the guidance](#) or speak to your health care provider about COVID-19 vaccines.

Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy](#).

## Previous diagnosis of COVID-19

People who have had COVID-19 should still be immunized with COVID-19 vaccines as not everyone develops a strong immune response after having COVID-19. Vaccine is the best way to help develop immunity.

If you've recently had a positive COVID-19 test result, you can wait up to 3 months for your booster dose. The likelihood of a COVID-19 reinfection during this period of time is small because having COVID-19 boosts your immunity.



You can also choose to get the booster dose at any time after your symptoms have passed. It is not harmful to get vaccinated and it will give you a good boost to your protection. Wait until you feel better and you are no longer required to self-isolate to get vaccinated.

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**COVID-19**

**Vaccination after COVID-19**

**What is immunity?**

Immunity is your body's ability to resist disease and occurs when your body is exposed to a disease organism, such as a virus. There are a few ways to acquire immunity:

**Vaccine-induced Immunity:** You're exposed to a part of a disease organism or a killed disease organism through vaccination

**Infection-Acquired Immunity:** You're directly exposed to the disease

When either happens, your immune system is triggered to produce antibodies that attack the disease. Your immune system has a memory and if you are exposed to the same or a very similar disease in the future, it will make the same antibodies much more quickly and help fight off the infection much faster and more strongly, often even before you have symptoms.

**Should I get vaccinated after I have had COVID-19?**

Yes. Even if you have had COVID-19, the safest way to ensure you are protected from getting it again is to get the vaccines.

Evidence from the US shows that risk of reinfection of COVID-19 for an unvaccinated person who had the illness previously is between **two and five times higher** than the risk of reinfection of COVID-19 for a vaccinated person who had COVID-19 illness.

**When can I get the vaccine after I have had COVID-19?**

You can get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you feel better and no longer have to isolate. Find out how to get a vaccine near you: [bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/vaccine-registration-eligibility](https://bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/vaccine-registration-eligibility)

ImmunizeBC has detailed descriptions of how vaccines work. You can find additional information on the COVID-19 vaccines at [bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine](https://bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine)


**Do I have protection after having COVID-19?**

We know there is some level of protection after someone has had COVID-19. People with very mild or asymptomatic (showing no symptoms) infection produce a lower immune response. Studies show the strength and length of protection from having COVID-19 varies greatly and will leave many people vulnerable to getting COVID-19 again.

**Are vaccines better at providing immunity?**

Trying to build immunity by getting COVID-19 is dangerous to you and others around you as you can pass it on. COVID-19 can cause serious illness, long term symptoms that impact your daily life, and even death.

Vaccination is a much safer and predictable way to develop immunity to COVID-19, as it isn't possible to get COVID-19 from the vaccine.



November 22, 2021

Learn more about [getting vaccinated after having COVID-19](#).

This document is also available in the following languages:

[عربي \(Arabic\)](#) | [American Sign Language](#) | [فارسی \(Farsi\)](#) | [Français \(French\)](#) | [Español \(Spanish\)](#) | [简体中文 \(Simplified Chinese\)](#) | [繁體中文 \(Traditional Chinese\)](#) | [ਪੰਜਾਬੀ \(Punjabi\)](#) | [한국어 \(Korean\)](#) | [Tiếng Việt \(Vietnamese\)](#) | [ትግርኛ \(Tigrinya\)](#)

## Allergies

If you have an allergy to an ingredient of one type of COVID-19 vaccine, you are **still able to receive the other type** - e.g. if you have an allergy to an ingredient in an mRNA vaccine, you should get the viral vector vaccine instead. Speak with your care provider if you have questions.

Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccine ingredients](#).

## Allergy to an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine ingredient

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You should not get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna/ Pfizer-BioNTech) if you have had a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to:

- Polyethylene glycol (PEG), an ingredient in both the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines. PEG can be found in some cosmetics, skincare products, laxatives, cough syrups, and bowel preparation products for colonoscopy. PEG can be an additive in some processed foods and drinks, but no cases of anaphylaxis to PEG in foods and drinks have been reported.
- Any component (part) of either the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

### **Allergy to a viral-vector COVID-19 vaccine ingredient**

You should not get a viral vector COVID-19 vaccine (AstraZeneca/ COVISHIELD) if you have had a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to:

- Polysorbate 80 which is in the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccines. It is also found in medical preparations (e.g., vitamin oils, tablets and anticancer agents) and cosmetics.
- A previous dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine or any part of the vaccine.

### **Severe allergic reaction after a 1st dose**

- People who experienced a severe immediate allergic reaction after the first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine can safely receive future doses of the same or another mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.
- Consult with an allergist or ask your primary care provider to explore options.
- You will be asked to stay in the clinic for 30 minutes after getting the vaccine so you can be monitored. By staying in the clinic, a health care provider can respond in the event you experience a reaction. Tell a health care provider if you feel unwell after your vaccine.

### **Previous reactions to other v**

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Previous reactions to non-COVID-19 vaccines do not mean that you should not get a COVID-19 vaccine. Ask your health care provider whether there are any similar ingredients in the vaccine that you had a reaction to and COVID-19 vaccines. If there are none, it is safe to get the COVID-19 vaccines.

## **Other allergies and reactions**

If you have a history of any of the following it is still safe to get the COVID-19 vaccines:

- X-ray dye allergy
- Bee and wasp stings allergy
- Food allergies
- Environmental allergies such as to pollen or dust mites
- Recurring anaphylaxis of unknown origin (idiopathic anaphylaxis)
- Systemic Mastocytosis
- Chronic hives
- Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)
- Contact allergy to propylene glycol (PG)

For more information on allergies and COVID-19 vaccination check the [FAQs](#) from the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

## **Health conditions and other considerations**

People who have medical conditions are still able to receive the COVID-19 vaccines. The health conditions below are NOT contraindications for COVID-19 vaccines. You should still get vaccinated if any of these apply to you.

### **Medical treatments**

If you are currently taking medication or undergoing treatment it is still safe to get the COVID-19 vaccines. If the medication you are taking suppresses your immune system, check with your healthcare provider about the best time to get the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure an optimal immune response.

### **Other health conditions**

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Anyone with the following is able to get mRNA COVID-19 vaccines:

- History of thrombosis following a previous dose of an adenovirus vector COVID-19 vaccine-like AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD
- History of capillary leak syndrome
- History of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) or heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)

## **Autoimmune conditions**

If you have an autoimmune disease, you should get the COVID-19 vaccine. Speak to your healthcare provider or medical specialist if you have specific questions.

Please refer to the information for [people with health conditions who are clinically extremely vulnerable](#) for further information about specific autoimmune conditions.

## **Children and young people**

Vaccine considerations for children are similar to adults. The vaccine can be given to children who take medications regularly, including youth with conditions that make them [clinically extremely vulnerable](#).

Vaccination should be delayed for 90 days following MIS-C (the rare multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children).

Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccinations and children](#).

People who have had COVID-19 should be immunized with COVID-19 vaccines. You should wait until you have recovered to get immunized.

## **Resources for clinically extremely vulnerable groups**

Some people with specific health conditions or taking specific treatments are considered clinically extremely vulnerable. Here you will find information and resources about getting the COVID-19 vaccine if you are part of this group.

A third dose of COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for immunocompromised. Booster doses are also recommended.

- [Learn about getting your vaccine](#)

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Information for health professionals can be found in the [COVID-19 vaccine resources for health professionals](#).

## **Transplant**

- [Organ transplant](#)
- [Bone marrow or stem cell transplant or CAR-T cell therapy](#)

## **Cancer**

- [Cancer](#)
- [Blood or bone marrow cancer](#)

A third dose of COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for some people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised.

[Learn about who is eligible to receive a third dose and how to get your third dose of vaccine.](#)

## **Severe respiratory conditions**

- [Information for people with cystic fibrosis](#)

## **Rare blood diseases**

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- [Sickle cell disease](#)
- [Thalassemia](#)
- [Paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria \(PNH\)](#)
- [Atypical Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome \(aHUS\)](#)
- [Blood or bone marrow cancer](#)

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### **Other rare diseases**

- [Metabolically unstable inborn errors of metabolism \(IEM\)](#)
- [Primary immunodeficiencies](#)

### **Splenectomy**

- Information for people who have had their [spleen removed or have serious problems with their spleen](#)

### **Diabetes on insulin**

- [Information for people with diabetes](#)

### **Kidney/renal disease**

- [Information for people with kidney/renal disease](#)

### **Significant developmental di**

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- Information for people with [developmental disabilities](#)

## **Pregnant with heart disease**

- [Information for people who are pregnant people with significant heart disease](#)

## **Neuromuscular/neurologic or muscular conditions that require respiratory support**

- [Neuromuscular, neurologic, or muscle conditions who use respiratory supports](#)

## **People whose immune system is affected by immunosuppression therapies they take**

- [Autoimmune rheumatic diseases](#)
- [Autoimmune neuromuscular or neurological conditions](#)
- [Inflammatory bowel disease](#)
- [Primary immunodeficiencies](#)
- [Cancer](#)
- [Blood or bone marrow cancer](#)

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## **Immune system weakened b**

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COVID-19 vaccines are not live vaccines, and there are no significant concerns about safety for those with weakened immune systems. It is possible that the vaccine may not work as expected in people who have a weakened immune system.

If you have questions and have a weakened immune system, speak to your healthcare provider about the COVID-19 vaccine.

A third dose of COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for some people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised.

[Learn more about who is eligible to receive a third dose and how to get your third dose of vaccine.](#)

**SOURCE:** Vaccine Considerations ( <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/vaccine-considerations#pregnant> )

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