

Vaccine questions

Find answers to common questions about COVID-19 vaccinations.

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Booster vaccines

Find out more about booster shots in the Yukon.

Why get a booster?

Evidence is emerging that the effectiveness of the vaccine may decrease over time. It's recommended that you receive a booster as soon as you're eligible.

A booster dose strengthens the immune system response. Protection from the vaccine shows signs of decreasing over time. It's not yet known how long protection from a booster dose will last.

Which vaccine will you get as a booster?

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is available for people aged 18 to 29. The Moderna vaccine is available for people aged 30 and over.

What size is the booster dose?

For people age 12 to 69 years, it's a half dose, or 50 mcg (micrograms) of Moderna vaccine.

For people age 70 and older, it's a full dose, or 100 mcg (micrograms) of Moderna vaccine.

Who can receive a booster dose in the Yukon?

Use the chart to learn when you're eligible for COVID-19 vaccines.



	Primary series 1st dose	Primary series 2nd dose	1st booster	additional boosters
6 months to 4 years	Available anytime	8 weeks after 1st dose	Not eligible	Not eligible
5 to 11 years	Available anytime	8 weeks after 1st dose	6 months after 2nd dose	Not eligible
12 to 17 years	Available anytime	8 weeks after 1st dose	6 months after 2nd dose	6 months after last booster
18+ years	Available anytime	8 weeks after 1st dose	6 months after 2nd dose	6 months after last booster

- Immunocompromised individuals may need an additional 3rd dose of their primary series.
- The bivalent booster is available for Yukoners ages 18+ and immunocompromised individuals ages 12+.
 - The bivalent booster targets both the original COVID-19 strain and Omicron variants.
- If you've recently had COVID-19, it's recommended to wait until at least 3 months have passed since symptoms started or testing positive before getting your next vaccine or booster.

How can you find the date of your last COVID-19 vaccine?

If you are not sure of the date you received your last COVID-19 vaccine there are 2 places you can find it. The information is available on the COVID-19 wallet-sized vaccination card you received. You can also look on your [proof of vaccination certificate](#).

Vaccine eligibility

Find out if you are eligible to get the vaccine in the Yukon.

You have a valid Yukon health care card

You're eligible to be vaccinated in the Yukon. Bring your health card with you to your immunization appointment. Check the booking schedule to find the dates that apply to you.

You're a Yukon resident studying outside of the territory

You're eligible to be vaccinated in the Yukon when you return home from school. You should plan to be in the Yukon for your 2nd dose, 8 weeks after your 1st. Bring your health card with you to your immunization appointment.

You live in the Yukon but do not have a Yukon health care card

If, for example, you're a temporary worker, student or have recently relocated, you're eligible to be vaccinated in the Yukon. You'll need to bring valid photo identification with you, such as a passport or driver's licence, plus 1 of the following:

- valid Yukon student card;
- proof of employment in the Yukon; or
- reasonable proof of Yukon residency (for example, a utility bill).

Check the schedule to find the clinic dates that apply to you.

If you're a B.C. resident who normally receives health care in the Yukon

If, for example, you live in Lower Post, you're eligible to be vaccinated in the Yukon.

Bring your B.C. identification with you when you come to the clinic. [Check the schedule](#) to find the clinic dates that apply to you.

You're Canadian but do not live in the Yukon

You are not currently eligible to be vaccinated in the Yukon.

You are not Canadian and do not live in the Yukon

You are not eligible to be vaccinated in the Yukon. You will not be allowed entry into Canada for the purpose of receiving a vaccine. You must be vaccinated in your home jurisdiction.

You have symptoms that could be COVID-19

Do not get vaccinated if you have any symptoms that could be due to COVID-19. This is so you do not spread the infection to others. If you have symptoms, you should self-isolate. Once you have completed self-isolation and you are symptom free, you can be vaccinated.

People who have recently had COVID-19 are recommended to wait 3 months following the start symptoms or taking a positive test before getting their booster.

You currently have or have had COVID-19

You should not be vaccinated while you're infectious or if you still feel unwell from a recent COVID-19 infection. This is so you do not spread infection to others at the clinic.

You can be vaccinated if you're no longer infectious and are feeling better from a COVID-19 infection.

You're pregnant, breastfeeding, immunocompromised or have an autoimmune condition

It's recommended that you get the vaccine. If you have questions, have a discussion with your health care provider about risks and benefits to help you make a decision.

You're planning to be pregnant

If you're planning to become pregnant, delay conception until at least 28 days have passed after your 2nd dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

You had a severe reaction to a previous COVID-19 vaccine dose

Talk to your health care provider if you had a severe reaction to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. This includes an allergic reaction. Do not get vaccinated until an allergist or another health care provider determines it's safe.

You've received another vaccine in the past 14 days

As of August 24, 2021, COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same time, before or after other immunizations.

You're allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG) or have an unknown allergy

You should not get the vaccine. Talk with your health care provider if you have a known allergy to polyethylene glycol, or have had an allergic reaction to an unknown cause.

About polyethylene glycol (PEG)

Polyethylene glycol (PEG) can rarely cause allergic reactions. It's found in products such as:

- medications;
- bowel preparation products for colonoscopy;
- laxatives;
- cough syrups;
- cosmetics;
- skin creams;
- medical products used on the skin and during operations;
- toothpaste;
- contact lenses; and
- contact lens solution.

PEG is not known to cause allergic reactions when found in food and drinks.

About the vaccine**What vaccines are available in the Yukon?**

In the Yukon, there are 2 different types of mRNA vaccines available:

- The Moderna vaccine is available to adults 30 and older.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is available to children aged 5 to 11.

- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is available to children and adults aged 12 to 29.
- The Moderna vaccine is available to children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years.

The minimum age to get a vaccine is based on the year you were born, following Chief Medical Officer of Health recommendations.

Janssen is an alternative vaccine option that's available in certain situations.

We have enough vaccine doses to respond to needs and can access additional doses quickly if we need them.

How does the vaccine protect you from COVID-19?

- A vaccine is a way to build your immune system. The vaccine teaches our bodies to produce protection against the COVID-19 virus. This protection prevents us from getting sick if we're exposed to the virus.
- In a large study where people were given 2 doses of the Moderna vaccine, people were 94.1 per cent less likely to become sick with COVID-19.
- Youth ages 12 to 17 who received the Pfizer vaccine were 100 per cent less likely to become sick with COVID-19.

How do you know the vaccine is safe?

Just like every vaccine we use in Canada, Health Canada approved Moderna's and Pfizer's mRNA vaccines. This means they are vaccines you can trust.

Health Canada-approved vaccines go through 3 stages of development:

- the exploratory stage;
- the pre-clinical stage; and
- the clinical stage.

Health Canada's regulatory system is proven and world class.

In the exploratory stage

Scientists do research. This helps to find vaccines that could help us develop immunity to a disease before we are exposed to it.

In the pre-clinical stage

Scientists look for safety concerns. They carry out this phase before testing vaccines in humans.

In the clinical stage

Promising vaccine candidates move on to the clinical stage.

This is the stage where scientists start testing vaccines in humans. Phase 3 studies involve thousands of volunteer participants. Scientists compare groups that received a vaccine to those who did not. Doing this answers whether the vaccine works and is safe for use.

Could there be long-term effects?

These mRNA COVID-19 vaccines went through complete clinical trials and were approved by Health Canada. The clinical trials, and people's experiences with the vaccine to date, have given us lots of information on short-term side effects. These are side effects that happen within a few days to a week after getting the vaccine. These side effects include fatigue, fever, soreness or redness where you received the vaccine, and other mild symptoms. They resolve on their own within a short period of time.

Many people have concerns about the possible long-term effects of the vaccine. The history of vaccines shows that, while very rare, vaccines can have delayed effects. But when they do, these effects tend to happen within two months of being vaccinated. The first doses of these vaccines were given in human clinical trials in July 2020 and now hundreds of millions of people worldwide have been vaccinated. To date, no vaccine safety issues have been found with either Moderna's or Pfizer's mRNA vaccines.

Other people have concerns about the mRNA technology. Although COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are new, this type of vaccine has been studied in people before. Scientists have been studying and working with mRNA vaccines for decades. This vaccine technology was ideal for the COVID-19 vaccines because it can be developed in a laboratory using readily available materials. This means the process can be standardized and scaled up, making vaccine development and production faster than through traditional methods.

Scientists have studied all available evidence, and the evidence strongly shows that mRNA vaccines are safe and will not cause long-term harm. mRNA technology has been used in human trials for other vaccines and even in clinical trials for different ways to treat cancer. These trials provided important information that showed mRNA is safe.

As the vaccines continue to roll out, safety will continue to be monitored. If a safety issue is detected, immediate action will take place to determine if the issue is related to the COVID-19 vaccine and determine the best course of action.

Why and how was a COVID-19 vaccine discovered so much faster than other vaccines?

Simply put, because there's nothing normal about a pandemic. The efforts to find a vaccine for COVID-19 have been on a scale that's never been seen before. With so many resources put towards these vaccines, they were developed in record time.

While the need to deliver the vaccines quickly was important, no steps in the approval process were missed. Instead, with more resources came faster results.

In normal times, there can be many challenges to clinical trials that can affect the overall timeline of a vaccine's development. A challenge often faced is that enough infections need to be happening in order to allow large-scale trials to happen. Another challenge can be finding enough volunteers for large-scale testing. Pfizer and Moderna did not face these challenges with their vaccine trials.

The development of these vaccines benefitted from many previous years of research into other viruses as well as [the mRNA platform](#).

How's the vaccine given?

The vaccine is given with a needle in your upper arm.

What if you're scared of needles?

When you arrive to get your vaccination, tell the nursing staff that you're afraid of needles. They'll do their best to accommodate your needs. This could include giving you the vaccine in a private setting.

Paramedics are always on site. They're ready to support people should they have an adverse reaction to the vaccine.

What can you expect after you get vaccinated?

[Find out about what to expect after vaccination.](#)

Where should you go to find reliable information?

When you look for information online, make sure it's from a trusted source. The federal or the Yukon government health websites are examples of sources you can trust. Your health-care provider is another trusted source. Do not hesitate to ask them your questions.

Why did the vaccine names change?

The vaccines themselves did not change. Each company has given a new name to their vaccines. The new names were announced in September 2021.

The Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccine now has the name Spikevax

The Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA COVID-19 vaccine now has the name Comirnaty

The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine now has the name Vaxzevria. Vaxzevria is not available in the Yukon.

You've heard of some side effects affecting the heart, after people receive an mRNA vaccine and want to know the risks

There are rare cases of heart inflammation from COVID-19 mRNA vaccines. One type of inflammation is myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle). The other is pericarditis (inflammation of the lining outside the heart).

In most of these people, symptoms began within a few days following their second dose of vaccine. The chance of having this occur is very low. Symptoms to watch for include:

- chest pain;
- shortness of breath; and,
- feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering or pounding heart.

Most people experience mild illness. They respond well to treatment and rest with a full recovery.

It's more common to get myocarditis and pericarditis from a COVID-19 infection. The benefits of immunization far outweigh the potential risks of COVID-19 infection.

If you have symptoms within a week of getting a COVID-19 vaccine, seek medical care. Read more on [heart inflammation and COVID-19 mRNA vaccines](#).

Do the COVID-19 vaccines affect fertility and menstrual cycles?

COVID-19 vaccines do not cause infertility. There is no current evidence that they impact menstrual cycles.

Some people have reported changes to their menstrual cycle following vaccination. However, it is important to know that many factors can impact menstrual cycles.

These factors include:

- sleep;
- stress;
- infection;

- diet; and
- exercise.

Getting COVID-19 may impact the menstrual cycle. More than 35% of people noted changes to their cycle after a COVID-19 infection. While studies are taking place to understand these impacts, we know that other vaccines do not affect the menstrual cycle. Read more from the [Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada](#).

If you are pregnant or thinking of getting pregnant, vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and your baby. Those who are pregnant are at increased risk of experiencing a severe case of COVID-19. Often this results in serious outcomes, including preterm birth. Learn more about [pregnancy and mRNA COVID vaccination](#).

COVID-19 vaccine resources

Government of Yukon

[mRNA vaccine immunization after-care sheet](#)

[mRNA vaccine information sheet](#)

[Vaccine information sheet for ages 12 and up](#)

[Vaccine information sheet for 5 to 11 year olds](#)

[Consent for immunization](#)

[A Path Forward: Next Steps](#)

Government of Canada

[Vaccines and immunization](#)

[Vaccines and immunization](#) - Immunize Canada

[Vaccine development and authorization](#)

[Vaccine safety](#)

[Coronavirus and Indigenous communities](#) - Indigenous Services Canada

[Immunization Information on the Internet: Can you trust what you read?](#) -

Immunize Canada

World Health Organization

[Immunization](#)

[COVID-19 FAQ Video](#)

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