

# COVID-19 Vaccination FAQ



Getting vaccinated is **the best choice** you can make to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community from COVID-19.

## What You Should Know

### What are the possible vaccine side effects? What about the long-term safety?

- Like any medication, vaccines may cause mild side effects and reactions that can last a few hours or a couple of days after vaccination
- Vaccine side effects usually happen within a few days, and always within six weeks. Vaccines are quickly broken down and removed from your body, and so cannot cause side effects months or years later. The only lasting impact of vaccination is the training it provides your immune system.
- **The safety of COVID-19 vaccines are closely monitored.** Any safety issues are responded to right away and Canadians are informed about any risks that come up.

### What do I need to know about reports of myocarditis (heart inflammation) and/or pericarditis (inflammation of tissue around the heart) and COVID-19 vaccination?

- Both myocarditis and pericarditis are more common **after COVID-19 illness** (a viral infection) than after vaccination
- While there have been rare reports of myocarditis/pericarditis after vaccination, the majority of cases have been mild, easily treated and individuals recover quickly

### How were the COVID-19 vaccines developed so fast?

Three factors allowed the COVID-19 vaccines to be developed quickly without skipping any safety steps:

1. **Decades of mRNA vaccine research.** In 2000, scientists figured out how to make synthetic mRNA safe for injection. After outbreaks of other coronaviruses in 2003 (SARS) and 2012 (MERS), scientists studied how the “spike protein” worked and how it could be used in vaccines.
2. **World-wide collaboration.** Data was shared across many countries to support the development of COVID-19 vaccines safely and quickly.
3. **A fast-tracked approval process.** Health Canada used a process that allowed manufacturers to submit data as it became available. Health Canada experts could then start the review process right away.

## Who provides consent for COVID-19 vaccination?

- Vaccination is only provided if **informed consent** is received from the person to be vaccinated as long as they have the capability to make the decision
- Even if an individual is able to provide informed consent, we encourage them to talk about their decision with their parent, legal guardian or health care provider
- Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to discuss vaccination with their child before attending a clinic

## How can a parent or legal guardian give consent for their child?

- Once children 5-11 years of age can be vaccinated, clinics will be offered outside of school hours. **This is to ensure that parents or legal guardians can be with their children to provide consent.**
- **It is preferred that children get their vaccine with a parent or legal guardian present at the clinic.** If necessary, children can go with an alternative caregiver to get vaccinated. A parent or legal guardian must be available by phone to provide verbal consent and review health history.

## Why get vaccinated if COVID-19 infection has a high survival rate?

- COVID-19 can be a serious illness for anyone, and for some people symptoms can last for months
- While most children have mild symptoms, some children can get very sick. Some can develop a serious medical condition called Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children. Others can experience more serious, longer-lasting symptoms that can affect their health and well-being. In very rare cases, the virus can also cause death.
- The vaccine is safe and virtually eliminates the risk of serious illness and death

## Should you get the vaccine if you have had COVID-19?

**Yes.** If you had COVID-19, you should still get the vaccine. It will help protect you from getting sick with COVID-19 again.

## Why is vaccination better than “natural” immunity?

When you get vaccinated, your **natural** immune response to COVID-19 is triggered. New evidence indicates people **get better protection by being fully vaccinated** compared to getting infected with COVID-19. If you had COVID-19, you may have some immunity, but we don't know how much or how long it may last.

## What are the benefits of being fully vaccinated?

- ✓ Have strong protection against COVID-19 and its variants. Most COVID-19 infections are in unvaccinated people. Cases among fully vaccinated individuals are far less likely. Serious illness (e.g., needing hospitalization or being on a ventilator) is very rare among fully vaccinated people.
- ✓ Able to do more things. You can enter settings that need proof of vaccination.
- ✓ Experience less hassles and restrictions. You may qualify for exemptions related to self-isolation, testing or travel.
- ✓ Protect the people around you
- ✓ Help resume normal life in Niagara

## What do I need to know about COVID-19 vaccination and pregnancy (current or future)?

- There is no evidence or reason to suspect that the COVID-19 vaccine could impair male or female fertility
- Pregnant people can get vaccinated **at any time during pregnancy or while breastfeeding**

## What can I do if my child is anxious or nervous about getting a needle?

- The health care provider will do their best to help put an anxious or nervous child at ease
- You can help your child in advance by using the [CARD system](#) for coping and answering questions they may have
- If your child finds needles painful, you may wish to apply a topical anesthetic from a pharmacy before going to the clinic to [numb the area](#)
- Review and practice helpful ways to stay calm, such as:
  - Sitting up right during the needle and relaxing your arm
  - Taking deep belly breaths before, during and after the needle
- Have your child bring an object with them to get their mind off the needle, such as a mobile device, fidget spinner or book

## What if my child fainted the last time they got a vaccine or they have a fear of needles?

- Fainting or nearly fainting can be common among children immediately after getting a vaccine. Reducing your child's anxiety can help prevent this.
- If they have fainted, or were dizzy during previous vaccinations or procedures, or if they have a high level of fear about needles, they should still get the vaccine
- Try to have your child eat something before they go to their appointment
- Tell the health care provider so that appropriate support can be offered

## How do I prepare my child for their vaccine?



Make sure they wear a loose fitting top or t-shirt



Have your child eat something before their appointment

## Vaccine Information



Speak to your health care provider



Call the COVID-19 Info-Line to talk to a public health professional at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074, press 7



Chat online in 90 different languages with auto-translate



For additional FAQs and more visit: [niagararegion.ca/covid-vaccine](https://niagararegion.ca/covid-vaccine)

## Get Vaccinated

You can still get your vaccine if you don't have a health card.

## Questions about COVID-19 vaccines for children and youth?

Anyone 12 years of age or older in Ontario can book a confidential phone appointment to speak with a paediatric registered nurse from The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids). The service is available in multiple languages. To book a phone appointment visit [sickkids.ca/vaccineconsult](https://sickkids.ca/vaccineconsult) or call 437-881-3505 (toll free 1-888-304-6558)



**To book an appointment:**  
[niagararegion.ca/covid-vaccine](https://niagararegion.ca/covid-vaccine)