

RNA COVID-19 Vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna)

Vaccination,
the best protection

March 28, 2022

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and its complications, in addition to other measures such as physical distancing, wearing a medical mask or face covering, and hand washing.

Disease	Signs and symptoms	Possible complications
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Cough• Trouble breathing• Loss of smell• Fatigue• Headaches• Muscle aches• Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea• Overall sick feeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent long COVID-19 complications lasting several months: trouble breathing, fatigue, weakness, difficulty falling/staying asleep, and concentrating• Pneumonia and other respiratory issues• Heart problems• Neurological problems such as brain inflammation, etc.• Death

The vaccine

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and its complications. Pfizer vaccine and Moderna vaccine are approved for people age 12 and over. For young people aged 12 to 29 years, Pfizer vaccine is recommended.

Pfizer vaccine or Moderna vaccine requires 2 doses. A booster dose of either vaccine is recommended for adults and adolescents who are at high risk of complications from COVID-19 or living in a restricted community facility (e.g.: refuge). It can also be offered to adolescents in good health who wish to receive it. A 2nd booster dose is also recommended for certain people at high risk of complications from COVID-19 (e.g.: resident in CHLSDs).

In adults, the efficacy of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines after 2 doses is 20-30% against infections caused by the Omicron variant. After the booster dose, efficacy is approximately 60-75% against infections caused by the Omicron variant and over 80% against hospitalizations. The booster dose is needed to further reduce transmission and increase protection, including protection against the Omicron variant.

People on dialysis or with weakened immune systems should receive 3 doses of vaccine, followed by 2 booster doses.

A booster dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine is also recommended for adults who received AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine. Administration of a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine after a dose of AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine does not appear to cause more reactions than 2 doses of RNA vaccine. However, people who received AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine may choose to continue their vaccination with AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine.

For people who had a positive test for COVID-19 before the 1st dose of vaccine, 1 dose is required followed by a booster dose. There is no risk in giving more than 2 doses of vaccine to someone who has had COVID-19, but the additional dose does not protect them more. For people who had COVID-19 when they were given the 1st dose or after, at least 2 doses are required. People on dialysis or with weakened immune systems should receive 3 doses of vaccine, followed by 2 booster doses.

Symptoms after vaccination

Some symptoms may be caused by the vaccine (e.g., pain at the injection site). Other problem may occur by chance and are not related to the vaccine (e.g., cold, gastro). Most reactions are harmless and do not last long. Local reactions can occur up to 8 days after vaccination. Reactions are less common among people age 55 and over. They are slightly less frequent after the 1st dose and after the booster dose than after the 2nd dose.

In a minority of those vaccinated, vaccine-induced reactions that prevent daily activities for 1 or 2 days may occur. Reactions include fatigue, headache, and muscle or joint pain. They can occur up to 8 days after vaccination. These reactions are less common among the elderly. They occur more often after the 2nd dose.

Pfizer and Moderna vaccines cannot cause COVID-19 because they do not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the disease. However, people who have been in contact with the virus could still develop COVID-19.

(see verso)

RNA COVID-19 Vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) *(continued)*

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Safety of the vaccine

Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are approved by Health Canada. They have met all the requirements for approval. These vaccines were tested on a large number of people. Experts are closely monitoring any adverse reactions that could occur following vaccination and taking measures to ensure the safety and effectiveness of these vaccines.

Frequency	Known reactions to this vaccine	What to do
In most cases (more than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain at the injection site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply a cold, damp compress at the injection site. Use medication for fever or discomfort if needed. See a doctor if symptoms are severe.
Very often (less than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headache, fatigue* Fever or shivering Joint pain Muscle soreness Diarrhea or vomiting Swollen armpit lymph nodes 	
Often (less than 10% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redness or swelling at the injection site. This reaction could appear more than 1 week after vaccination 	
Rarely (less than 1 person in 1,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facial swelling 	
Very rarely (around 2 persons in 100,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myocarditis or pericarditis following vaccination** 	

* The majority of youth aged 12 to 15 years experience fatigue or a headache. Fatigue, headache, muscle and joint pain are more common after the 2nd dose.

** In young people aged 12 to 29 years, this risk may be lower with the Pfizer vaccine. Myocarditis or pericarditis occur more frequently in young males under the age of 30 following the 2nd dose. For the Moderna vaccine, the frequency is approximately 8 times higher after the 2nd dose than after the 1st dose (approximately 17 cases per 100,000 doses versus 2 cases per 100,000 doses respectively). Cases present most often with mild symptoms and recover quickly.

Approximately 2 persons in 100,000 can have a severe allergic reaction after receiving this vaccine. The frequency of this reaction is higher than usually expected after a vaccine, but it is still very rare.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, trouble breathing, loss of smell, etc.), consult the *COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool*: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/self-isolation/covid-19-self-assessment-tool>.

We recommend that you stay at the clinic at least 15 minutes after vaccination because allergic reaction may occur. If an allergic reaction occurs, the symptoms will appear a few minutes after vaccination. The person giving the vaccine will be able to treat this reaction immediately.

For any questions, contact the person giving the vaccine, or Info-Santé 811 or your doctor.