

COVID-19 Vaccines FAQs

1 ARE COVID-19 mRNA VACCINES SAFE?

mRNA vaccines have been held to the same rigorous safety and effectiveness standards as all other types of vaccines:

- mRNA vaccines do not contain the live virus, and COVID-19 cannot be acquired solely by the administration of the vaccine.
- mRNA vaccines do not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. mRNA never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA (genetic material) is kept.

2 ARE THE TWO AVAILABLE COVID-19 mRNA VACCINES INTERCHANGEABLE?

Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are not considered interchangeable, therefore the vaccination series should be completed for both doses with the same vaccine.

3 CAN COVID-19 VACCINES BE ADMINISTERED WITH OTHER VACCINES (E.G., INFLUENZA VACCINE)?

COVID-19 vaccines should not be given simultaneously with other vaccines to maximize benefit of vaccination. Wait for a period of at least 14 days after the administration of another vaccine before administering a COVID-19 vaccine to prevent erroneous attribution of an adverse event following immunization (AEFI) to a particular vaccine.

4 DO I STILL NEED TO WEAR A MASK AND PRACTISE SOCIAL DISTANCING AFTER I RECEIVE THE VACCINE?

All individuals should continue to practise recommended public health measures for prevention and control of SARS-CoV-2 infection and transmission regardless of vaccination with COVID-19 vaccine, at this time.

5 ARE THERE CERTAIN POPULATIONS THAT CANNOT RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are contraindicated in persons with proven immediate or anaphylactic hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine. COVID-19 vaccine may be offered to individuals in the following populations if a risk assessment deems that the benefits outweigh the potential risks for the individual and if informed consent with the individual/substitute decision maker includes discussion about the insufficiency of evidence on the use of COVID-19 vaccine in these populations:

- Immunocompromised persons due to disease or treatment, and those with an autoimmune condition
- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Individuals who are not in the authorized age group (children and adolescents)

References:

1. Government of Canada. NACI. Guidance on the prioritization of initial doses of COVID-19 vaccine(s). December 18, 2020.
2. Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Product Monograph. December 9, 2020.
3. Pfizer Inc. Press Release. Pfizer and BioNTech conclude phase 3 study of COVID-19 vaccine candidate, meeting all primary efficacy endpoints. November 18, 2020.
4. Moderna Inc. Press Release. Moderna announces primary efficacy analysis in phase 3 COVE study for its COVID-19 vaccine candidate and filing today with U.S. FDA for Emergency Use Authorization. November 30, 2020.
5. Moderna Therapeutics Inc. Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Product Monograph. December 23, 2020.
6. Abbasi J. Medical news and perspectives: COVID-19 and mRNA vaccines - first large test for a new approach. JAMA 2020;324(12):1125-1127.
7. Government of Canada. NACI. Recommendations on the Use of COVID-19 Vaccines. December 23, 2020.
8. Moderna Therapeutics Inc. Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Product Monograph. December 23, 2020.
9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Understanding mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines. Updated December 18, 2020.

