

COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet

Pfizer / BioNTech

**Be sure to read this whole sheet carefully before receiving the vaccine.
Ask a health care provider any questions you have before receiving the vaccine.**

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new virus (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 was recognized for the first time in December 2019 and has since spread around the world to cause a pandemic. COVID-19 can be passed from an infected person to others when the infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks or breathes. Infected people can spread the infection even if they have no symptoms.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, tiredness and loss of smell or taste. Some people infected with the virus have no symptoms at all, while others are mildly ill and still others become severely ill. Of those diagnosed with COVID-19, about 1 in 5 people become severely ill and about 2 out of every 100 people die. Even people with mild symptoms can feel unwell for long periods of time after a COVID-19 infection.

How does the Pfizer / BioNTech vaccine protect against COVID-19?

The vaccine causes our body to produce protection (such as antibodies) that prevent the COVID-19 virus from entering our cells to make us sick. The vaccine uses a new method (messenger RNA - mRNA, the genetic code for a piece of the virus) to help our bodies make protection against the virus. The vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm and will require two doses given 21 days apart. In a large study, the vaccine was shown to work very well at preventing people from becoming sick with COVID-19 (the vaccinated group of people was 95% less likely to get sick compared to the group that did not receive the vaccine).

What are the risks of the vaccine?

The vaccine has been given to about 22,000 people, and has not caused any serious side effects. A common side effect is pain where the needle was given. Some people can also feel tired, or develop a fever or chills in the day or two after receiving the vaccine; these symptoms are generally mild and go away on their own. Although it has not been shown with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, allergic reactions sometimes occur after receiving a vaccine. In studies, most people who have received the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine have been monitored for more than two months with no longer term side effects found. People who have received the vaccine in studies continue to be monitored.

Who should get the vaccine?

The vaccine can be used for anyone 16 years of age and over, except for pregnant women. Even if you have already had a COVID-19 infection, you should still receive the vaccine. Public health officials will provide information on which groups of people are able to receive the vaccine at this time based on several factors including the amount of vaccine available.

Who should not get the vaccine?

- Pregnant women should not receive the vaccine at this time. This may change in the future as more information becomes available.
- Those less than 16 years of age should not receive the vaccine at this time. This may change in the future as more information becomes available.
- If you have any symptoms that could be due to COVID-19, you should not receive the vaccine at this time. Talk with your health care provider about your symptoms and getting a COVID-19 test. Your health care provider will advise you when you are able to receive the vaccine.

What measures that have been put in place to safely deliver immunizations during COVID-19?

Health care providers are being very careful to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when offering the vaccine. Examples of extra safety protocols include the following:

- You will be asked about any symptoms when you arrive at the clinic. People with symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend the clinic.
- You will be asked to wear a mask while at the clinic, as well as to clean your hands, and to stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others (except those you live with).

What should you do before coming to the clinic?

- Wear a short-sleeve shirt or shirt with sleeves that are easy to roll up.
- Be sure you have eaten regularly that day.
- Bring your mask.
- Bring any identification required by the clinic, such as your health card.
- Bring your immunization record with you and/or download the [CANImmunize](#) app to keep track of this and other vaccines.

What should you do after receiving the vaccine?

- You will be asked to wait 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine to be sure you are feeling well. You may be asked to wait in the clinic or outside (such as in your vehicle). Inform a health care provider if you feel unwell while waiting. You should not leave the clinic (or clinic parking lot) for at least 15 minutes after receiving your vaccine.
- Inform your health care provider if you develop any concerning side effects after leaving the clinic. Go to the hospital right away if you develop any serious symptoms or symptoms of an allergic reaction such as hives, difficulty breathing or swelling of your face.
- Continue to follow the advice of public health officials to prevent COVID-19, such as wearing a mask, and maintaining a physical distance of 2 metres from people outside of your household.
- If this is your first COVID-19 vaccine, be sure to return for your second dose in 21 days (3 weeks). Book an appointment if that is required to receive the next dose. Bring your immunization record with you when you come for your next dose in 21 days.

If you have any questions, please speak with the person providing the vaccine or contact: