Municipality of Chatham-Kent
CK Public Health
Reach out for more information
Tel: 519.355.1071 x 1900 Email: covid19@chatham-kent.ca
Website: www.ckphu.com/covid-19-vaccine

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COVID-19 Vaccine: Frequently Asked Questions

The information regarding COVID-19 vaccines is rapidly changing. The most up to date information can be found on our webpage at https://ckphu.com/covid-19-vaccine/.

1. How do vaccines work?

Vaccines work by training your body's immune system to recognize and fight a virus that causes a disease. To do this, a vaccine triggers an immune response by introducing parts of the virus into the body through vaccination.

By injecting a vaccine, your immune system safely learns to:

- recognize a virus
- produce antibodies to fight the virus
- remember the virus for the future

If the virus reappears, your immune system will recognize it and attack them before it can develop and cause sickness.

2. How do the COVID-19 Vaccines work?

Pfizer	mRNA vaccines	mRNA vaccines tell the cells in our body to make the COVID-19 spike protein so our body will learn to recognize it as a foreign invader. This will train our immune system to fight against COVID-19.
Moderna		
AstraZeneca	Viral vector-based vaccines	These vaccines use a modified, harmless version of COVID-19 to send information to our cells. This information tells our cells to make the COVID-19 spike protein so our body will learn to recognize it as a foreign invader. This will train our immune system to fight against COVID-19.
Janssen (Johnson & Johnson)		

The best vaccine is the one that is available to you. Get vaccinated as soon as you are eligible, with the vaccine that is being offered to you at that time. It is the best way to protect yourself as soon as possible.

None of the vaccines give you COVID-19.

3. Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Creating a new vaccine typically takes years. However, the progress on COVID-19 vaccines is happening quickly for many reasons, including:

- being informed by decades of research on other strains of coronavirus prior to COVID-19, such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Sars-CoV (SARS)
- advances in science and technology
- international collaboration among scientists, health professionals, researchers, industry and governments
- increased dedicated funding

Before any vaccines are available in Ontario, they:

- undergo rigorous clinical trials to ensure they are safe and effective
- are evaluated and authorized for use by Health Canada, using rigorous standards

Ontario's plan to make sure vaccines remain safe for Ontarians includes:

- securely and safely transporting and storing vaccines at required conditions and temperatures
- establishing safe clinic spaces to give people immunizations, including providing the required training to those administering vaccines
- monitoring for any adverse reactions or side effects that may occur after vaccination and taking appropriate measures

Health Canada will continue to monitor all authorized vaccines to ensure they continue to be safe and effective.

4. Why should I get vaccinated?

COVID-19 can be a serious illness for many people and for some people, symptoms can last for months. Those people are called long haulers. The virus can even damage the heart, brain, lungs and increase the risk of long-term health problems. Even young, healthy people can feel unwell for weeks to months following the COVID-19 infection.

The short-term side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are less than the risk and potential long-term health damages caused by the COVID-19 virus.

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5. How is it being determined who gets the vaccine and when?

The Province of Ontario has outlined a phased approach to who gets the vaccine and when. This process is based on an Ethical Framework for COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution, and guided by a provincial COVID-19 vaccine implementation plan:

Chatham-Kent COVID-19 Vaccination Phases

'All Paths Lead to Success'

Phase 1: A Jan – Mar 2021	Phase 1: B Mar – Apr 2021	Phase 2 Apr – Jun 2021	Phase 3 Jun – Aug 2021
Public Health Leading in Collaboration with Partners			
High-Risk Populations		**General Population** *Increasing Primary Care & Pharmacy Support*	
• Residents, staff, and essential caregivers of long-term care, high-risk retirement and First Nations elder care homes • Alternative level of care patients in hospitals • Highest Priority and Very High Priority health care workers, in accordance with Ministry of Health guidance	• Adults 80+ • Other staff, residents and caregivers in retirement homes and other congregate care settings for seniors • High Priority health care workers, in accordance with Ministry of Health guidance • Adult recipients of chronic home care • Indigenous adults	• People aged 79 to 60 in 5-year increments • People aged 59 to 16 who are clinically extremely vulnerable • Other risk groups not identified for Phase 1	• Remaining population aged 59 to 16 not yet immunized
All vaccines received will be administered except doses required for boosting prior to the next vaccine shipment. Populations in Phase 1 (A and B) will be immunized in parallel as vaccine supplies permit.			
This plan is subject to change based on vaccine availability and provincial directive.			

Last updated: February 21, 2021

6. What is the shot like?

The vaccine is provided by a needle in the upper arm. Some vaccines require 2 doses, which are given at two separate times. If you require a second dose, instructions will be provided to you at the time you receive your first dose. At this time, Ontario is extending 2nd doses with a few exemptions. Please read our latest news post for more information.

7. How effective are the COVID-19 vaccines?

Only vaccines that are safe and effective will be approved for use in Canada.

Four COVID-19 vaccines are currently approved for use in Canada:

	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	AstraZeneca	Jansen
Effectiveness in preventing COVID-19	**95% effective**	**94.1% effective**	**62% effective**	**66% effective**

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The best vaccine for you is the one that is available to you, as all COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada have been found to be effective at preventing COVID-19 in clinical trials.

At this time, the long-term protection from COVID-19 vaccines is unknown.

8. **Can people under the age of 18 get vaccinated for COVID-19?**
Health Canada has approved four vaccines for use in Canada.

	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	AstraZeneca	Jansen
Ages eligible to receive the vaccine	16+ years of age	18+ years of age		

People who are younger than the approved ages should not be offered the COVID-19 vaccine as the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine has not yet been established for those age groups. As more vaccines are approved, and more research is conducted on these vaccines, there may be an opportunity for those under 16 to be vaccinated in the future.

9. **What are the side effects and risk from the COVID-19 vaccines?**
Most of the side effects for the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca, and Janssen COVID-19 vaccines are mild to moderate and will resolve after a few days. The side effects that have been reported for the four vaccines include:

Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	AstraZeneca	Janssen
Very Common (more than 1 in 10 people) • pain at the injection site • headache • feeling tired • muscle or joint pain • fever or chills **Common** (1 in 100 to 1 in 10 people) • redness & swelling at the injection site • nausea **Uncommon** (1 in 100 people)	**Very Common and Common:** (more than 1 in 10 people and 1 in 100 to 1 in 10 people) • Pain at the injection site • Tiredness • Headache • Muscle ache and stiffness • Chills • Fever	**Very Common** (more than 1 in 10 people) • tenderness, pain, warmth, redness, itching or swelling at injection site • generally feeling unwell • feeling tired • chills or feeling feverish • headache • feeling sick (nausea) • joint pain or muscle ache **Common** (1 in 100 to 1 in 10 people) • fever • being sick (vomiting) or diarrhea **Uncommon**	**Very Common** (more than 1 in 10 people) • pain at the injection site • headache • feeling tired • muscle aches • nausea **Common** (1 in 100 to 1 in 10 people) • fever • redness & swelling at injection site • chills • joint pain **Uncommon** (1 in 100 people)

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• enlarged lymph nodes • feeling unwell **Very Rare** serious allergic reactions such as anaphylaxis	• Swelling or redness at the injection site • Nausea and/or vomiting • Enlarged lymph nodes	(1 in 100 people) • sleepiness or feeling dizzy • decreased appetite • enlarged lymph nodes • excessive sweating, itchy skin or rash	• rash • muscle weakness • arm or leg pain • feeling weak • feeling generally unwell **Very Rare** serious allergic reactions such as anaphylaxis

In very rare cases, the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca, and Janssen COVID-19 vaccines could cause serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis). A serious allergic reaction would usually occur shortly after receiving a dose of either vaccine. You will be asked to stay 15 minutes after getting your shot so you can be monitored for a severe reaction.

Signs of a serious allergic reaction include, but are not limited to:

- trouble breathing
- swelling of the mouth and throat
- hoarseness or wheezing
- hives (a bad rash all over your body)
- a fast heartbeat
- convulsions (seizures)
- high fever (over 40°C or 104°F)

If you experience side effects, call your health care provider or public health to seek medical advice. Vaccine side effects will continue to be monitored as people receive the vaccine. Public health will keep track of the reported side effects to make sure the vaccine continues to be safe.

Even if you experience mild side effects, it is important to receive the second dose. You may get the same side effects with your second dose.

10. Who should not get the vaccine?

You should not get vaccinated if you:

- have allergies to any of the vaccine ingredients, including polyethylene glycol (PEG), tromethamine (trometamol or Tris), and polysorbate 80. If you are unsure of your allergies, please talk with your physician or healthcare provider.
- have had a severe allergic reaction after the first dose of the vaccine or a severe allergic reaction after a dose of any other 'adenovirus-based vaccine'

You should talk to your health care provider if:

- Are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment or suffering from autoimmune disorder

You should wait to get the vaccine if you have a fever, are sick with COVID-19 or have received a different vaccine in the past 14 days.

11. What happens after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines have been found to be very effective in preventing COVID-19 in clinical trials, however there is still a chance that some people may still get COVID-19 even after they are vaccinated. There are a number of reasons for this including:

- **Building up immunity takes time.** Because of this completion of a vaccination series (i.e. two doses of the vaccine or one dose, depending on the vaccine) is needed for your body to have maximum protection against COVID-19, however that protection is not immediate. Someone that comes into contact with the virus just before or after receiving the vaccine, may still get COVID-19 since they will not have the time to build up their immunity.
- We don't yet know what level of immunity in the population is needed to achieve community immunity.

All of this means that we need to continue to wash our hands, stay home when sick, maintain physical distancing, wear a face mask as appropriate, cover your coughs and sneezes and avoid touching your face.

12. Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No, the COVID-19 vaccine will not make you sick. None of the COVID-19 vaccine currently approved and in development use the live virus that causes COVID-19. However, if you come into contact with the virus just before or after receiving the vaccine, you may get COVID-19 since your body will not have time to build up its immunity.

13. If I had a reaction to a different vaccine in the past, can I still get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Check with your doctor or health care provider if you have had a serious allergic reaction to a vaccine in the past. They will look at your medical records and help you make the decision.

14. If I tested positive for COVID-19 in the past, should I still get the vaccine?

Yes. You will have some immunity from your infection, but no-one knows how long it will last. There are cases where people have gotten COVID-19 again before they could get vaccinated. You should not get the vaccine if you are sick or have COVID-19 right now. Wait until you are better to get the shot.

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15. **I just got vaccinated for something else. Can I still get the COVID-19 vaccine now?**
    You should wait 14 days before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine if you have had another type of vaccine.

    After receiving your second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, you should not receive any other vaccines for 28 days. If for some reason you need another vaccine within 28 days, discuss this with your doctor or health care provider.

16. **Will the COVID-19 vaccine change my DNA?**
    No, the vaccine cannot change your DNA in any way. The mRNA and the viral vector-based vaccines do not enter the part of your cell where your DNA is stored.

17. **What happens if people wait to get the vaccine?**
    When you're eligible for a vaccine, don't delay your chance. Get it as soon as you can as vaccine supply can change, and it's best to protect yourself as soon as possible.

18. **I have heard there are new strains of the COVID-19 virus. Is there information about the effectiveness of the existing vaccine on the new strain?**
    Currently, experts believe the vaccine will work with the new strain. There is no evidence to suggest that the vaccine will not be effective against the new strain, however this is currently being explored through studies.

19. **Will people need to get the vaccine every year?**
    At this time, the long-term protection from the COVID-19 vaccines is unknown.

20. **Will the vaccine still be effective if there is a delay between my first and second dose (if the vaccine requires a second dose)?**
    Yes. The time between doses can be lengthened; the time between doses can not be shortened.

21. **If someone travels after receiving the vaccine, do they still need to self isolate for 14 days after returning from their trip?**
    At this time, non-essential travel is not recommended. Self-isolation for two weeks following travel is a requirement and it will continue to remain in effect following vaccine administration.

22. **Is it acceptable for someone with food or seasonal allergies to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**
    Please talk with your physician or healthcare provider to learn if it is safe for you to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

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23. **Will the COVID-19 vaccine stop the COVID-19 virus, or will it decrease the severity of the virus if I get infected?**
    Yes, the vaccines are very effective at preventing COVID-19 symptoms in people who get it. It is not known if you can still give the infection to someone that has not been immunized if you have been exposed to the virus.

24. **Will the COVID-19 vaccine be made mandatory? If the COVID-19 vaccine becomes mandatory, will medical exceptions be accepted?**
    At this time, the COVID-19 vaccine is not mandatory, but highly encouraged to help protect against the COVID-19 virus. Medical exceptions are not currently required.

25. **Do I get to choose what COVID-19 vaccine I get?**
    No. **The best vaccine for you is the vaccine that is available you at that time**. Get vaccinated as soon as you are eligible, with the vaccine that is being offered to you at that time. It is the best way to protect yourself as soon as possible.
    The important thing is that you get the same vaccine for both doses, if the vaccine requires two doses. If you got the Moderna for your first shot, you must get the Moderna for your second shot. If you got the Pfizer-BioNTech for your first shot, you must get the Pfizer-BioNTech for your second shot. If you got the AstraZeneca for your first shot, you must get the AstraZeneca for your second shot.

26. **What if I do not have a health card or Government issued ID? Can I still get the vaccine?**
    Yes – when you are eligible to get the vaccine, you will not be turned away because you do not have a health card or Government issued ID.

27. **Is the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine the same as the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes. The Janssen COVID-19 vaccine was developed by the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson. **If you have any other questions or concerns, please connect with CK Public Health:**

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COVID-19 Phone Line: 519.355.1071 x 1900
For more information, please visit our COVID-19 Vaccine webpage:

http://ckphu.com/covid-19-vaccine