

COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario

January 8, 2021

COVID-19 vaccines

- Vaccines are safe, effective and the best way to protect you and those around you from serious illnesses like COVID-19.
 - Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. This can reduce your risk of developing COVID-19 and make your symptoms milder if you do get it.
 - Our supply will not arrive all at once, so distribution will happen in stages. The goal is for everyone in Ontario to be able to get a COVID-19 vaccination if they want one, as soon as enough doses are available from manufacturers.
 - Ontario has started to roll out its three-phased vaccine distribution implementation plan.
 - Phase 1, starting December 15, 2020: Limited doses of the vaccine available for health care workers in hospitals, long-term care homes and retirement homes, other congregate care settings and remote Indigenous communities.
 - Phase 2, starting this winter: Increasing stock of vaccines, available to all health care workers, residents in long-term care homes, retirement homes, home care patients with chronic conditions and additional Indigenous communities.
 - Phase 3, starting when vaccines and doses are available: Vaccines available widely across Ontario for anyone who wants to be immunized.
 - Check [Ontario.ca/covidvaccine](https://ontario.ca/covidvaccine) regularly for up-to-date information on the vaccine and implementation phases – the web page is updated frequently.
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Vaccine safety

- Safe and reliable vaccines can help protect you and your family from COVID-19.
 - They will be an important tool to help stop the spread of the virus and allow individuals, families and workers to safely resume normal life.
 - The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine does not cause a coronavirus infection. It helps to build up your immunity to the virus, so your body will fight it off more easily if it affects you.
 - This can reduce your risk of developing coronavirus and make your symptoms milder if you do get it.
 - The effectiveness and immune response of the vaccine is being monitored as the vaccine is rolled out.
 - Vaccination is expected to be an effective way to prevent the spread and reduce the impact of COVID-19.
 - **Only vaccines that Health Canada determines to be safe and effective will be approved for use in Canada and available in Ontario.**
 - After independent and thorough scientific reviews for safety, efficacy and quality, Health Canada has approved two vaccines for use in Canada:
 - [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) – approved on December 9, 2020
 - [Moderna](#) – approved on December 23, 2020
 - This means the vaccines:
 - were tested on a large number of people through extensive clinical trials
 - have met all the requirements for approval, including safety
 - will be monitored for any adverse reactions that may occur after vaccination and appropriate measures will be taken
 - Both vaccines require two doses for your body to develop adequate immunity.
 - After two doses, they are expected to be 94-95% effective, which will lower how much of the virus can spread in the population, help build herd immunity and stop the pandemic.
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- They were both manufactured in Belgium.
- [Learn more about the vaccines from Health Canada's website.](#)

Vaccine development

- 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, including working with the federal government and other provinces and territories
 - Health Canada will continue to monitor all authorized vaccines to ensure they continue to be safe and effective.
 - Read [more information on vaccines](#) and [vaccine authorization updates](#) from the Government of Canada.
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