



COVID Vaccine

Pfizer–BioNTech COVID–19 Vaccine FAQ



What is Canada's COVID-19 immunization plan?

Although Canada has secured a sufficient vaccine supply, doses for the whole population will not arrive at the same time. A phased approach is being prepared for vaccine delivery that prioritizes Canadians who need early access to the vaccine. High-risk groups will receive the vaccine first starting in December 2020. Vaccination will be expanded to the entire population throughout 2021 as vaccine supply increases. There are no costs associated with receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.



Who SHOULD receive the COVID vaccine?

Pfizer–BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is indicated to prevent COVID-19 in individuals 16 years of age and older.



Who should NOT receive the COVID vaccine?

1. Individuals who are less than 16 years of age as the safety and efficacy has not yet been established.
2. Individuals suffering from acute severe febrile illness should postpone immunization.
3. Individuals who have a hypersensitivity/allergy to the vaccine formulation components listed in Table 1.



Who should seek medical consultation to determine if they should receive the COVID vaccine?

Individuals who are:

1. Pregnant or breastfeeding
2. Immunocompromised
3. Receiving anticoagulant therapy or have a bleeding disorder
4. Experiencing symptoms that could be due to COVID-19



What is the dose of the vaccine and do I need more than one injection?

The vaccine is a suspension that is injected intramuscularly. It MUST be diluted prior to administration and the dose after preparation is 0.3mL administered at 0 days and 21 days. In other words, you require a series of two doses (0.3mL each) 21 days apart.



How is the vaccine stored?

The vaccine is stored in the freezer between -80°C to -60°C . It must be protected from light and stored in the original cartons, until ready to use. It is because of these storage requirements that initial shipments of vaccines must be administered on-site at provincially dedicated vaccine clinics.



What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Side effects of the vaccine include but are not limited to:

Uncommon: may affect up to 1 in 100 individuals

- Enlarged lymph nodes

Very Common: may affect more than 1 in 10 individuals

- Injection site pain
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Joint pain
- Fever

Seek medical attention for serious symptoms or symptoms of an allergic reaction such as:

- Hives
- Swelling of the face, tongue, or throat
- Difficulty breathing

Call 9-1-1 if you experience a severe allergic reaction



What is the process for reporting suspected side effects?

Complete the Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) form for your province and submit it to the local health unit.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/publichealth/services/immunization/reporting-adverse-events-following-immunization/form.html>



How long does it take before I'm protected from COVID?

If you receive 2 doses of vaccine 21 days apart you are considered to be clinically protected **7 days after receiving the SECOND dose**. As with any vaccine, vaccination may not protect all recipients.



Will the vaccine be prioritized to high-risk populations, such as the elderly, residents, and staff of congregate living arrangements such as long-term care homes, etc.?

In the first round, only staff will be immunized as the vaccine is not stable enough to store and transport to multiple congregate living sites. At this time, the vaccine must be administered on-site at provincially dedicated vaccine immunization clinics.

TABLE 1

- Nucleoside-modified messenger RNA encoding the viral spike glycoprotein of SARS-CoV-2.
- Non-medicinal ingredients:
 - ALC-0315 = (4-hydroxybutyl) azanediyl) bis(hexane-6,1-diyl) bis (2- hexyldecanoate)
 - ALC-0159 = 2- [(polyethylene glycol)- 2000]-N, N-ditetradecylacetamide
 - 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycero-3- phosphocholine
 - cholesterol
 - dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate
 - monobasic potassium phosphate
 - potassium chloride
 - sodium chloride
 - sucrose
 - water for injection

Note: The Vaccine vial and stopper are latex free

References:

1. PHAC-Public Health Agency of Canada: Canada's COVID-19 Immunization Plan: Saving Lives and Livelihoods
2. Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Product Monograph, December 9, 2020