

RNA COVID-19 Vaccine

Vaccination,
the best protection

March 31, 2021

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and its complications, in addition to other measures such as physical distancing, wearing a medical mask or face covering, and hand washing.

Disease	Signs and symptoms	Possible complications
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Cough• Trouble breathing• Loss of smell• Fatigue• Headaches• Muscle aches• Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea• Overall sick feeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pneumonia and other respiratory issues• Heart problems• Neurological problems• Death

The vaccine

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and its complications. RNA COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for people age 16 and over. Research is still being done regarding its use among people under 16.

RNA COVID-19 vaccines require two doses. Shots are administered by intramuscular injection. After the first dose, RNA vaccine efficacy is 92%. The second dose is mainly for long-term protection. Given the current very high spread of COVID-19, administration of the second dose can be postponed to allow more people to be vaccinated. It has a 95% success rate after two doses.

Symptoms after vaccination

Some symptoms may be caused by the vaccine (e.g., pain at the injection site). Other problems may occur by chance and are not related to the vaccine (e.g., cold, gastro). Most reactions are harmless and do not last long. Reactions are less common among people age 55 and over.

Vaccine-induced reactions that prevent daily activities for one or two days may occur in a small minority of those vaccinated. Reactions include fatigue, headache, and muscle or joint pain. They can occur up to 8 days after vaccination. These reactions are less common among the elderly and occur slightly more often with the second dose.

Vaccines cannot cause COVID-19 because they do not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the disease. However, people who have been in contact with the virus in the days preceding or following their vaccination could still develop COVID-19. It is important to continue to apply health measures until a majority of the population has been vaccinated.

For people who have had COVID-19 before the first dose of vaccine, a single dose is required. Although there is no risk of giving two doses of vaccine to someone who has had COVID-19, the frequency of adverse reactions is higher. In addition, the 2nd dose does not provide any additional protection for these people. For people with a weakened immune system or who had COVID-19 when they were given the 1st dose or in the days after they were vaccinated, two doses are required.

Safety of the vaccine

RNA COVID-19 vaccine is approved by Health Canada. It has met all the requirements for approval. The vaccine was tested on a large number of people. Experts are closely monitoring any adverse reactions that could occur following vaccination and taking measures to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine.

(see verso)

RNA COVID-19 Vaccine (continued)

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Frequency	Known reactions to this vaccine	What to do
In most cases (more than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pain at the injection site	
Very often (less than 50% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Headache, fatigue, fever or shiveringJoint painMuscle sorenessDiarrhea or vomitingSwollen armpit lymph nodes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Apply a cold, damp compress at the injection site.Use medication for fever or discomfort if needed.See a doctor if symptoms are severe.
Often (less than 10% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Redness, swelling at the injection site	
Rarely (less than 1 person in 1,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Facial swelling	

Approximately 2 persons in 100,000 can have a severe allergic reaction after receiving this vaccine. The frequency of this reaction is higher than usually expected after a vaccine, but it is still very rare.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, trouble breathing, loss of smell, etc.), consult the *COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool* to find out if you need to be tested:

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/covid-19-symptom-self-assessment-tool/>

We recommend that you stay at the clinic for at least 15 minutes after vaccination because allergic reactions may occur. If an allergic reaction occurs, the symptoms will appear a few minutes after the vaccination. The person giving the vaccine will be able to treat this reaction immediately.

For any questions, contact the person giving the vaccine, or Info-Santé 811 or your doctor.