



Sioux Lookout
First Nations
Health Authority

CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine

August 27, 2021

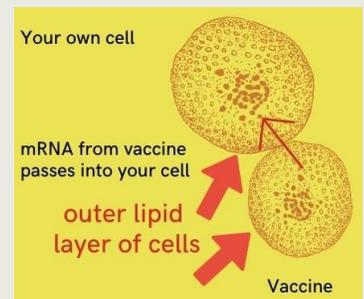
The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is an mRNA vaccine used to prevent COVID-19. It was approved for use in Canada for people 16 years and older on December 9, 2020. As of August 18, 2021, anyone born in 2009, even if they have not turned 12 years old yet, can be vaccinated. This will help to protect students as they return to school.

How does an mRNA vaccine work?

RNA stands for ribonucleic acid. RNA inside our cells contains recipes for making essential proteins.

mRNA stands for *messenger* RNA. The Pfizer vaccine uses mRNA to send a new recipe to your cells. The mRNA is inside an envelope made of lipids. The outer lining of the vaccine cell and your own cell is also made of lipids. These are attracted to each other. When they come close together, the envelope carrying the mRNA can easily slide inside your cell.

Your cell uses the new recipe to make coronavirus spike proteins. Your cell shows these spikes on its outer layer. Your immune system reacts because the spikes do not belong. It makes antibodies to fight and destroy them. Your immune system will recognize the spike proteins on the COVID-19 virus and attack it if you are infected.



How is the vaccine given?

It is given by needle into the big muscle of your arm. Each dose is 0.3ml. There are two doses in total. The time in between doses is 21 days up to 4 months.

We are still learning about COVID-19 and the vaccines. This info is accurate as of August 27, 2021.



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How well does it work?

In vaccine trials, it was as much as 95% effective at preventing infection around two weeks after the second dose. The vaccine might be less effective in the elderly and those with a weak immune system. In youth 12 – 15, it is 100% effective.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

The common side effects include pain at the injection site, body chills, tiredness, and fever. These side effects go away on their own in a day or so. As with all vaccines, allergies or other serious reactions can happen. This is rare.

Health Canada continuously reviews the safety and effectiveness of vaccine. If there are concerns, they respond quickly to ensure the safety of Canadians. No major concerns have been identified so far.

Can children get the vaccine?

Vaccine clinical trials are underway. It is possible that children under 12 will be able to get this vaccine in the coming months.

If I am pregnant or breastfeeding, can I get this vaccine?

Yes, you can. If you are pregnant, it is recommended that you get fully vaccinated as there are risks around COVID-19 during pregnancy.

I have allergies. Can I get the vaccine?

Yes but speak with a community health physician before being vaccinated. You may have to wait 30 minutes before leaving the clinic to make sure you are feeling well.



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I had COVID-19. Should I get the vaccine?

Yes, you should get the vaccine even if you had COVID-19. But, if you are sick right now, or have been in the past 3 months, talk with your community health team first.

Can I get COVID-19 after being vaccinated?

Yes, you can. You do have a much lower risk of getting sick or having severe symptoms. Caution is needed because of the widely spread Delta variant. Get fully vaccinated and practice public health measures to help you to lower your risks of becoming sick with COVID-19 or the Delta variant.

Will it protect me against variants?

Studies show that Pfizer vaccine is effective against Alpha and Delta variants. But as some variants are easier to spread and easier to catch, public health measures are still needed to help protect yourself.

How long will the vaccine protect me?

Studies show that protection level from mRNA vaccines such as Pfizer decreases over time. As of August 18, 2021, a third dose will be offered to people in certain high-risk groups. This list will change, so check with your community health nurse to see if you are eligible. The third dose will help give the extra protection needed against the Delta variant for:

- people who have had organ transplants
- hematological cancer patients on treatment
- people being treated with anti-CD20
- people who live in high-risk congregate care settings such as long-term care and retirement homes, and elder care lodges.

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Can I choose which COVID-19 vaccine I want?

You are free to choose. All of the COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved for use in Canada are effective in preventing serious COVID-19 infection. The sooner you get vaccinated, the sooner you have protection. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are available to everyone who is 12 years and older. If you were born in 2009 and not yet 12, these vaccines are available to you too.

Do you have any questions? Write to us at: ACWinfo@slfha.com

To learn more:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/pfizer-biontech.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0329-COVID-19-Vaccines.html>

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19_vaccine_info_sheet.pdf

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/12/09/1013538/what-are-the-ingredients-of-pfizers-covid-19-vaccine/>