



Sioux Lookout  
First Nations  
Health Authority

# CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Moderna Spikevax® mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ

July 15, 2022

COVID-19 vaccine is very effective to help prevent severe symptoms, hospitalization, and death from a COVID-19 infection. Together with the use of public health measures, the spread of COVID-19 can be slowed down. The Moderna Spikevax mRNA COVID-19 vaccine is approved for use in people 6 months and older in Canada.

#### How do mRNA COVID-19 vaccines work?

mRNA vaccine means for ‘messenger ribonucleic acid’ or ‘messenger RNA’. Messenger RNA is a tiny molecule that carries instructions. Its job is to tell cells how to make proteins. Health Canada describes mRNA vaccines as follows. “mRNA vaccines teach your cells how to make a protein that will create an immune response. The vaccines do this without using the live coronavirus that causes COVID-19. After getting the vaccine, your body will start making antibodies. The antibodies made will help fight an infection if COVID-19 enters your body in the future.”



Learn more about how mRNA vaccines work, visit [www.sfnha.com/covid/](http://www.sfnha.com/covid/)

#### How many doses are there?

Each person begins by getting 2 doses of the vaccine. The doses are given at least 28 days apart. You are fully vaccinated two weeks after the second dose.

We are learning that protection can fade over time. Many people are eligible for booster shots. These are important for reminding your body’s immune system about the virus it needs to fight. Booster shots help you get longer lasting protection. Check with the nursing station to make sure your COVID-19 vaccines are up to date.

We are still learning about COVID-19 and vaccines. This information is accurate as of July 15, 2022.



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### **What about booster doses?**

Everyone 12+ years of age should have a third dose. This will boost your level of protection against COVID-19 and variants like Omicron.

It is recommended all adults aged 18-59 who had a third shot at least five months ago receive a fourth dose. If you have had COVID-19 within the last 3 months, talk to your healthcare provider.

### **What about children under 12 years of age?**

The Moderna vaccine is now approved for children 6 months and older. Health Canada has authorized a two-dose primary series of 25 micrograms each, with the second dose given 8 weeks after the first dose. This is half the dose authorized for children 6 to 11 years of age and one quarter of the dose authorized for people over 12 years of age. Speak to your health care provider for more information.

### **What are the common side effects?**

The most common side effect is a sore, tender arm at the site where you had your needle. Some people will feel very tired, have a headache, body pain, a low fever, chills, nausea, or vomiting. Some people get swelling in their armpit on the side where they got their needle. These side effects go away on their own within a week.

Sometimes, side effects feel worse after the second dose. If your side effects are more severe than this, call your nursing station.

### **Are there any severe side effects?**

Serious side effects are rare. There is a rare condition that can affect the heart muscle or the sac around the heart after having this vaccine. If someone has this side effect, it can be treated and resolved.



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### **Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

No. There is no way to catch COVID-19 from this vaccine because there is no live virus in it.

### **I already had COVID-19. Should I still have the vaccine?**

Yes, it is recommended that you still get vaccinated after having COVID-19. It is possible to have more than one COVID-19 infection since there are new variants. The effects of having a COVID-19 infection can be complicated and long-lasting. Vaccines can help protect you from this.

Getting vaccinated can also help strengthen your immunity. People can develop immunity from vaccination and a prior infection. Getting immunity in two ways may give that individual stronger protection.

Ask your health team about the best timing to have COVID-19 vaccine after you had an infection.

### **If I am pregnant or breastfeeding, can I have the vaccine?**

Yes. This vaccine is strongly recommended for those who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Your risk of complications in pregnancy from a COVID-19 infection is much lower if you are vaccinated. It is safe to have at any stage of pregnancy. The antibodies you make after having the vaccine may help to protect your baby from COVID-19 through your placenta or in your breastmilk. If you are pregnant and need a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your healthcare provider.

### **I have allergies. Can I have the vaccine?**

If you are allergic to any ingredients or if you had an allergic reaction to the first

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dose, talk with your community health team. They will help you decide the best and safest way forward with you.

### Does it matter if I get Moderna or another vaccine?

It is most important to be vaccinated as soon as you can so that you are protected from COVID-19. The Moderna Spikevax vaccine is similarly safe and effective to the Pfizer Comirnaty vaccine.

If you are over 30 years of age, the Moderna vaccine is a better option for you. Studies show that it provides better protection for those who are older or who have a weaker immune system.

### After I have the vaccine, can I return to 'normal' life?

Even after getting the vaccine, keep on with public health measures. Keep your distance. Wear a mask. Wash your hands. We still need to protect those among us who are not vaccinated, or who are more vulnerable due to medical conditions, age, or pregnancy.

### What more do we need to do?

**Keep your vaccines up to date.** Get all the booster doses you are eligible for. This will help to slow the spread of the virus, reduce the number of cases with severe symptoms, and keep people out of the hospital or needing advanced care.

**Keep Omicron out.** We still need to help slow the spread of the virus down so that our communities and health care systems are not overwhelmed. Keep using all the public health measures. Isolate and test if you have symptoms.

**Be prepared.** Do what you can to make sure that you and your household are ready and able to isolate if you need to, or if your community has an outbreak.



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**Be kind to each other.** Many people have become tired on this long journey. Help each other or ask for help when you need it.

### Questions?

Contact your nursing station or write to us at [ACWinfo@slfnha.com](mailto:ACWinfo@slfnha.com) or join us weekly for a Facebook Live Q and A with Dr. Lloyd Douglas, Wednesdays at 5:00 pm.

More resources are available on our website: [www.slfnha/covid/](http://www.slfnha/covid/)