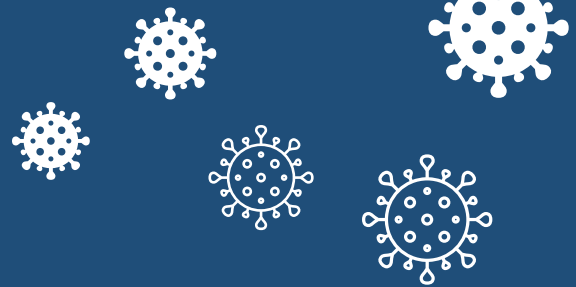


GET THE FACTS

COVID-19 VACCINE



JANUARY 11, 2021



South East Toronto
Family Health Team



How was the COVID-19 vaccine developed so quickly?

We know you have many questions about the COVID-19 vaccines. We have been carefully following the emerging science behind them. *Please be careful about where you get your information and know that your health and wellness is our only priority.*

As of today, here is what we know and what you need to know:

1. Our leading scientists approved the vaccines for use in Canadians. Health Canada, the organization responsible for making sure that vaccines and other products are safe and effective before being released for Canadians, has a world-class and robust review system.
2. The vaccines work. A 94-95% efficacy level was seen with the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines.
3. The vaccines are safe. Though these vaccines are the first mRNA vaccines approved for use in humans, mRNA therapies have been successfully used in cancer treatments for years.
 - The vaccines approved so far have shown to be very safe, comparable to other vaccines already approved for use in Canada. Over 70,000 people combined were involved in trials of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.
 - Canada is continuing to monitor the data as more people worldwide are vaccinated. As with all other marketed vaccines, this post-market surveillance will help uncover any rare adverse events that were not detected in the clinical trials. Health Canada has robust processes to share any important post-market safety data as it becomes available.

Many members of our team have received their first dose of the vaccine! The vaccines are going to be available to the wider population over the next few months, likely to start in the spring. We are not in charge of availability but understand that the plan is to start with people who are at highest risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, which includes those with chronic medical conditions. We will be sure to share any new information as soon as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

Your SETFHT Team



IMPORTANT REMINDER

There is not enough evidence on the duration of protection and the effectiveness of preventing asymptomatic transmission for the COVID-19 vaccines. As such, recommended public health measures (wearing a face mask, physical distancing, etc.) are still required after receiving the vaccine.

Click on the following hyperlinks to access the official, Health Canada-approved product monographs for the vaccines: [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) & [Moderna](#).

The Government of Ontario has issued the following statement: 'vaccines will not be mandated; however, people will be strongly encouraged to get vaccinated'.

Recommendations for vaccination in specific populations (individuals with allergic reactions, immunocompromised, etc.) can be found [here](#).

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) is an External Advisory Body that provides independent, ongoing and timely medical, scientific, and public health advice on all immunizations in Canada. NACI is our 'go-to' source for reputable information on immunizations. Their detailed report on COVID-19 vaccines is available [here](#).

Considering that the fastest vaccine took 4 years to develop, it is natural to have some worry about the safety and effectiveness of a vaccine developed so quickly. However, it's important to consider these key points:

- Scientists didn't start from scratch. Research on a different strain of coronavirus (the Middle East Respiratory Virus) from 2012 provided much of the groundwork.
- Never before have we seen this much global collaboration and sharing of resources between researchers.
- The massive amount of dedicated funding allowed for ultra-fast mobilization of resources. It also allowed for multiple companies to work on the vaccine at the same time which increased the chance of finding a successful vaccine.

More information on Canada's vaccine approval process & safety requirements can be found [here](#).

- FAQs about the vaccines (including a list of medicinal & non-medicinal ingredients) are available [here](#).
- Ontario's vaccine availability & rollout plan (including a full list of vaccine candidates that are undergoing review by Health Canada) can be found [here](#) & [here](#).
- A video and a one-page summary outlining results from the vaccine clinical trials (including safety and efficacy data) can be found:
 - Videos: [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) & [Moderna](#)
 - One-page summaries: [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) & [Moderna](#)

PREGNANCY & BREASTFEEDING

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC) has issued a [statement](#) advising that pregnant or breastfeeding women should be offered vaccination at anytime if they are eligible and no contraindications exist.