

Ministry of Health

What you need to know about your COVID-19 vaccine appointment

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Note: This document is an updated combination of documents previously titled “What you need to know about your COVID-19 vaccine appointment” and “What youth need to know about their COVID-19 vaccine appointment”. **This document applies to all eligible age populations: seniors, adults, youth and children.**

This guidance provides basic information only. This document is not intended to provide or take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or legal advice.

Please read this document to know what to expect for your upcoming vaccine appointment.

Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccination

What do I need to bring to my appointment?

- Documentation to confirm your identity
 - Bring your health card/Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card (even if it is expired). If you do not have an OHIP card that is okay. **You can still get vaccinated if you do not have an OHIP card, or if your OHIP card is expired.**
 - If you do not have a health card, please bring another form of government-issued photo identification (ID) such as a driver's license, passport, Status Card, birth certificate or government issued identification from other jurisdictions like a foreign passport.
 - If you do not have a health card or government-issued photo ID, you can bring a document or a combination of documents that include your legal name, a photo and your date of birth. Examples could include a piece of registered mail, pay stub, or a student card

- If you do not have any of the above, call your [local public health unit](#) to help you.
- Immunization record, if available, to keep track of your COVID-19 vaccine.
- Proof of COVID-19 immunization from your previous dose, if available.
- An [allergy form](#), if you are allergic to the COVID-19 vaccine or any component of the COVID-19 vaccine. See the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet \(age 12+\)](#) and/or the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet: for Children \(age 5-11\)](#) for a list of vaccine ingredients.
- Any assistive devices you may need (e.g., scooter, wheelchair, cane) and items to help you pass the time (e.g., cell phone, book).
- Reading glasses and/or hearing aid, if required
- Mask that covers the mouth, nose and chin.
- A support person, if required (e.g., interpreter, parent/guardian, or someone to help you during the vaccination).
- If you are nervous about the vaccination, bring something to help distract yourself, such as a mobile device, headphones for music, or a book.

What do I need to do to prepare for my appointment?

- Read the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet \(age 12+\)](#) and/or the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet: for Children \(age 5-11\)](#) and follow up with your health care provider (e.g., your family doctor or nurse practitioner) if you have any questions.
- If you regularly take medication, you should continue to take it and eat your meals as usual. Make sure you have something to eat before coming to the clinic to prevent feeling faint or dizzy while being vaccinated.
- Individuals who are planning to become pregnant, pregnant or breastfeeding are eligible and recommended to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Speak with your obstetrician, midwife or primary care provider or call your local public health unit if you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Wear a loose-fitting top or a t-shirt so that the health care provider can easily access your upper arm for the vaccination.
- Do not wear any scented products.
- **If you have [symptoms of COVID-19](#), you should not attend your appointment at the clinic. Call the provincial booking line, Public Health Unit and follow their instructions for rebooking your appointment.**

- If you have been deemed a close contact of a COVID-19 positive case, you should not attend a vaccine clinic and should wait until your isolation period is over to get your vaccine.
- Do not arrive more than 10 minutes before your appointment to avoid crowding at the clinic.
- You may need to wait outside before your appointment. Please dress for the weather.

What can I expect when I arrive at my appointment?

Health care providers are being very careful to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when providing immunizations. Clinic staff will take every precaution to ensure your health and safety during your visit. Public health measures, such as physical distancing, hand sanitization, mask-wearing will be in place at clinics. All health care providers, patients, support persons, parents/guardians, and other staff need to follow all public health measures in the clinic. Please read and follow any signs or instructions provided at the clinic.

- You will be asked to provide your health card/OHIP card or other form of identification.
- You will be asked to answer a series of questions to see if you have signs or symptoms associated with COVID-19 before entering the clinic. These questions will be like the health screening you do before you go to school and/or work.
- You will be asked questions about your medical history (for example about any allergies you have).
- You will be asked to wear a mask while at the clinic, to clean your hands, and practice physical distancing from others (at least 2 metres/6 feet apart).
- You will be asked to stay for 15-30 minutes after you receive the vaccine to monitor for any unexpected changes in your health or allergic reactions.

Will I be required to give consent?

Yes. In accordance with requirements under the [Health Care Consent Act, 1996](#) (HCCA), before administering a COVID-19 vaccine, the health practitioner must obtain your consent, or if you are incapable of consenting to the COVID-19 vaccine, the consent of your substitute decision-maker. Generally, to be considered capable of consenting to the vaccine, you must be able to understand the information relevant to making the decision AND be able to appreciate the consequences of the decision.

If the health practitioner is of the opinion that you are **incapable** of consenting to the vaccine, your substitute decision-maker (which may be a legal guardian or family member depending on your circumstances) may give consent on your behalf.

Before providing your consent to a COVID-19 vaccine, you should receive and understand information on:

- The type of vaccine you are receiving
- The expected benefits of the vaccine
- The potential risks and side effects of the vaccine
- Other options, aside from the vaccine
- The likely consequences of not receiving the vaccine

What if I have allergies?

The health care provider at the vaccine clinic will ask about allergies and talk about what is right for you. If you have previously had an allergic reaction to a vaccine or injectable medication you may be asked to wait longer at the clinic after your immunization.

Check the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet \(age 12+\)](#) and/or the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet: for Children \(age 5-11\)](#) for more details on the vaccine ingredients, including polyethylene glycol, tromethamine (trometamol or Tris) and polysorbate 80.

- If you have had an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or to any of its components, you must consult with an allergist/immunologist before getting vaccinated to see if the vaccine can be given to you safely.

For more detailed recommendations for individuals with allergies, please consult the [Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) guidance document

What if I have other medical conditions?

If you have an autoimmune condition, or are immunocompromised due to disease or treatment, you may need to speak with your health care provider prior to immunization.

Individuals who are planning to become pregnant, pregnant or breastfeeding are eligible and recommended to be vaccinated as soon as possible, at any stage in pregnancy. See the [COVID-19 Vaccination: Pregnancy & Breastfeeding Patient Decision-Making Tool](#) for more information.

Please consult the [Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#) guidance document for more information. If you have a medical condition for which you receive ongoing treatment, you may wish to speak to your health care provider about whether the vaccine is right for you.

What if I take blood thinners?

If you have a bleeding problem, bruise easily, or use a blood-thinning medicine (e.g. warfarin or heparin) you can receive the vaccine.

What if I have had a blood clot or had capillary leak syndrome (CLS) in the past?

If you have experienced major venous and/or arterial thrombosis (blood clot) with thrombocytopenia (low platelets) following vaccination with any vaccine **you cannot get** the AstraZeneca or Janssen (Johnson and Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have experienced a previous cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) with thrombocytopenia or have experienced heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT) **you cannot get** the AstraZeneca or Janssen (Johnson and Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have previously experienced episodes of capillary leak syndrome (CLS) **you cannot get** the AstraZeneca or Janssen (Johnson and Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine.

What if I fainted the last time I got a vaccine or I have a fear of needles?

If you have fainted, or became dizzy with previous vaccinations or procedures, or if you have a high level of fear about injections, you should still get the vaccine. Tell the health care provider at the clinic so that appropriate supports can be offered. You can also bring a person with you for support or bring something to help distract yourself (e.g., mobile device, headphones for music, a book)

What if I was diagnosed with myocarditis or pericarditis after a previous dose of my COVID-19 vaccine?

Individuals that have been diagnosed with myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) or pericarditis (inflammation of the lining of the heart) following vaccination with a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine should wait to receive a next dose until more information is available. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization, Public Health Ontario and The Ministry of Health continue to follow this closely and will update this recommendation as more evidence becomes available.

COVID-19 Vaccination After Care

What should I do right after receiving the vaccine?

- After your vaccine, you should stay in the clinic for 15 to 30 minutes. This is to make sure you do not have an allergic reaction. Allergic reactions do not happen often. Staff giving vaccines know how to treat allergic reactions. Let staff know if you notice a skin rash, swelling of your face or mouth or throat, problems breathing, and/or feel unwell.
- If waiting inside the clinic, be sure to leave your mask on and remain at least 2 metres/6 feet away from others.
- Use the alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands before leaving the clinic.
- Do not operate a vehicle or other form of transportation for at least 15 to 30 minutes after being vaccinated (as advised by the health care provider) or if you are feeling unwell.
- If someone is picking you up from the clinic, they should get you after the 15 minute waiting period in the clinic is finished. Your support person or driver should follow the direction of clinic staff regarding where to meet/collect you.

What should I expect in the next few days?

For what to expect in the days after immunization, please see the [After your COVID-19 Vaccine](#) appointment sheet. If you are concerned about any reactions you experience after receiving the vaccine, contact your health care provider. You can also contact your [local public health unit](#) to ask questions or to report an adverse reaction.

Things to remember after you receive the vaccine

- The vaccine is an additional way to protect yourself against COVID-19. After either dose of the COVID-19 vaccine you should continue to follow COVID-19 public health measures, such as wearing a mask, practising physical distancing and washing your hands.
- Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and get tested if you develop symptoms.
- Keep this sheet AND your printed COVID-19 Immunization receipt from the vaccination today in a safe place and bring it with you for follow-up COVID-19 vaccinations as instructed by the vaccination clinic.