COVID-19 Vaccine

Public Health – Fact Sheet

Immunization is one of the most important accomplishments in public health. Immunizations help eliminate and control the spread of infections and diseases. Vaccines help your immune system recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause disease.

What is COVID-19 disease?

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This virus can spread from person to person through activities such as coughing, sneezing and talking. COVID-19 may also spread by touching something that has the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands.

Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness, but the virus can affect different people in different ways. Some will become seriously ill and require medical attention. People with underlying medical conditions are more likely to experience serious illness.

What is the COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccines work by presenting our body with something that looks like the COVID-19 virus. Our immune system can then learn to fight against the virus. This can protect you against an infection or serious illness if you are exposed to COVID-19 in the future. All COVID-19 vaccines used are effective in preventing serious illness due to COVID-19.

Who should get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine is available free of charge to eligible Manitobans. Please visit manitoba.ca/covid19/index.html for eligibility criteria. The following people should receive a dose:

- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Residents of long-term care homes and other congregate living settings
- People with underlying medical conditions that place them at higher risk of severe COVID-19
- People who are pregnant
- People living in or from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities
- Members of racialized and other equity-deserving communities
- People who provide essential community services

Depending on your health history, your health-care provider may recommend more doses of the vaccine. You can receive the COVID-19 vaccine together with the flu vaccine.

Who should NOT get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Talk to your health-care provider prior to immunization with the COVID-19 vaccine if you:

- Have had an allergic reaction after a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine
- Have had an allergic reaction to any contents of the vaccine (ex: polyethylene glycol [PEG], Tromethamine [trometamol or Tris])
- Have had myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) or pericarditis (inflammation of the lining outside of the heart)
- Have had multisystem inflammatory syndrome (called MIS-C in children and MIS-A in adults)

Anyone with high fever should postpone immunization until recovered. Anyone with a mild illness can still receive the vaccine. You may get sick with COVID-19 before you can get the vaccine. If this occurs, you should wait to get vaccinated at least until you have recovered.

What are the possible side-effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Health Canada approves vaccines based on a review of quality and safety. It is common to experience soreness, redness or swelling where you got the vaccine. Swollen lymph nodes can happen after COVID-19 vaccination. Some children may have fever, drowsiness, fussiness, loss of appetite or an upset stomach. These are mild reactions and usually

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last one to two days. You can give acetaminophen (ex: Tylenol®) for fever or soreness.

Acetylsalicylic acid-ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should NEVER be given to children because it can cause a severe liver and brain disease called Reye's Syndrome.

A severe allergic reaction is a serious but very rare side-effect of getting the vaccine. Symptoms could include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat and face. It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine so you or your child(ren) can be monitored. If symptoms occur after leaving the clinic, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for immediate attention.

Myocarditis/pericarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle/lining around the heart) is a very rare reaction that may occur after vaccination. It can cause shortness of breath, chest pain or the feeling of a fast or abnormal heartbeat. Most people who experienced these symptoms had them within 7 days after receiving the vaccine. If you experience any of these symptoms, go to the nearest emergency department or health centre. You can get myocarditis/pericarditis from COVID-19. Myocarditis/pericarditis caused by the COVID-19 vaccine is much milder than when it is caused by COVID-19 disease.

Report any serious or unexpected side-effects to a health-care provider.

Your record of protection

All immunizations are recorded in a person's immunization record in Manitoba's Immunization Registry.

This registry enables:

- your health-care provider to find out which immunizations you or your child(ren) have received,
- the production of immunization records or notification to you about overdue vaccines,
- Public health officials to monitor how well vaccines work in preventing disease.

You can get your immunization record by submitting a request online via forms.gov.mb.ca/immunization-update-request. Your immunization record will be mailed to you.

You may also be able to get a copy by:

- contacting your local public health office; or
- checking if your local medical clinic or physician's office can provide it to you; or
- asking at a local nursing station or health centre.

For a listing of public health offices please visit: manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html

The Personal Health Information Act protects your information and/or that of your child(ren). You can have your personal health information and/or that of your child(ren) hidden from view from health-care providers. For more information, please refer to manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/phims.html or contact your local public health office to speak with a public health nurse.

For more information on COVID-19 disease and vaccines:

- talk to your health care provider; or
- call Health Links – Info Santé in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200; toll free elsewhere in Manitoba 1-888-315-9257; or
- visit:

  Manitoba's COVID-19 website: manitoba.ca/covid19/index.html

  Manitoba's Immunization Program website: gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/index.html

  Health Canada's COVID-19 website: canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html