

# Have questions about the **COVID-19** vaccines?



Below are some answers to commonly asked questions about COVID-19 vaccines.

## 1. Why should you get vaccinated?

If you are not vaccinated, you can get COVID-19 and spread it to others who might be at higher risk of illness, even if you don't have symptoms. You might experience mild symptoms; however, others can get very sick, require hospitalization and experience more serious and longer-lasting symptoms. By getting vaccinated, you will contribute to the community immunity of the whole population.

## 2. Were the vaccines developed too quickly?

Creating a new vaccine can sometimes take years. The progress on COVID-19 vaccines happened more quickly for many reasons, including:

- advances in science and technology
- international collaboration among scientists, health professionals, researchers, industry and governments
- increased dedicated funding
- many individuals willing and able to participate in clinical trials

No corners were cut while creating the vaccines.

## 3. Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe and effective?

Health Canada approved two mRNA vaccines that are currently used in Ontario, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccine. Approval by Health Canada means that the vaccines:

- are safe, effective and manufactured to the highest quality
- can trigger an adequate immune response for protection against COVID-19

COVID-19 vaccines are effective in preventing severe illness and hospitalization from COVID-19 after two doses. Vaccines are important in helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.

#### **4. What are the expected side effects from COVID-19 vaccines?**

Like any medication, vaccines can cause mild side effects and reactions that can last a few hours or a few days after vaccination. They are a sign that the vaccine is beginning to work. Common side effects may include:

- redness, soreness or swelling on the arm where you got the needle
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle and joint pain
- chills
- mild fever

It is more common for vaccines to have side effects that happen right away rather than many months or years later. As part of the vaccine safety program in Canada, ongoing monitoring of the COVID-19 vaccines will continue. There is also long-term follow-up of those who were vaccinated as part of the clinical trials. Health Canada provides weekly reports on vaccine safety.

#### **5. Can you get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

No. There is no live virus in the vaccine, it cannot give you COVID-19.

#### **6. Can the COVID-19 vaccine change your DNA?**

No. mRNA cannot enter the part of our cells where DNA is stored. The vaccine cannot interact or change your DNA in any way

#### **7. Should you get the COVID-19 vaccine if you have had COVID-19?**

If you have had COVID-19, you should still get the vaccine. It will help protect you from getting new COVID-19 infections. If you are recovering from COVID-19, you should wait to get the vaccine until you don't have any symptoms and are no longer in self-isolation.

Find more answers to COVID-19 questions by visiting: [www.hamilton.ca/COVIDvaccines](http://www.hamilton.ca/COVIDvaccines)