



Belleville and Quinte West
Community
Health Centre

Information About COVID-19 VACCINES

The Vaccines Are Safe

The two mRNA vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) approved for use in Canada work by sending a message to our body's immune system to stimulate our own natural immune response. Research into mRNA vaccine technology began in the early 1990s, so this science is not new. As well, more than 70,000 people were involved in the trials of these approved vaccines and, as of January 2021, more than 15 million people have been vaccinated worldwide. No serious safety concerns have been identified.



The Vaccines Are Effective

We know the vaccines protect us from catching COVID-19 and getting more severe illness from COVID-19. The 94 to 95% effectiveness of both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna two-vaccine schedule is as good as the results of the best vaccines we have for preventing any disease.

People who were vaccinated for the COVID-19 virus were about 20 times less likely to get sick with COVID-19 than those who were not vaccinated. The vaccine also likely prevents us from spreading COVID-19 to our loved ones and those around us, although studies are ongoing. This level of efficacy will play a major role in helping slow spread and move us towards a post-pandemic Canada.

When Will I Get the Vaccine?

Ontario's goal is to vaccinate every eligible person by the end of 2021. In general, older adults and others at high risk of getting sick or transmitting the virus will be vaccinated before others.

The Hastings and Prince Edward Public Health Unit is planning the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine in our area. We do not yet know when BQWCHC clients will be accessing the vaccine, but as information becomes available we will share this information on our website. When there is a plan to provide access to the COVID-19 vaccine for BQWCHC clients, you will receive information from our Centre.

In the meantime, it is crucial that we all continue to follow public health protocols; wear a mask in public spaces, keep two metres apart, and wash hands often. It will take some time to vaccinate enough of our community members to achieve shared protection through herd immunity.



COVID-19 VACCINE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the vaccine's known side-effects?

As with other vaccines, some people can develop mild side effects in the days following immunization that are generally not serious and go away on their own. In the studies, side effects MAY include: pain where the needle was given, redness and swelling, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, mild fever, and/or swollen glands (less frequently). These types of side effects are expected and simply indicate the vaccine is working to produce protection and are more likely to occur after the second dose.

Should I get the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

Pregnant and breastfeeding women were not included in trials for the currently available vaccines. However, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada has stated that "the documented risk of not getting the COVID-19 vaccine outweighs the theorized and undescribed risk of being vaccinated during pregnancy or while breastfeeding and vaccination should be offered." The Ontario Ministry of Health guidance states that pregnant women should discuss risks and benefits with their family physician or primary healthcare provider.



Should I get the vaccine if I have a history of allergies or am immunosuppressed?

People who have ever had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of an mRNA vaccine or any of the ingredients in the vaccine should not receive it. You should discuss any allergies or other health conditions you may have with your family doctor or nurse practitioner before you receive the vaccine.

If you are immunosuppressed due to a condition or treatment, discuss the benefits and risks of vaccination with your family doctor or nurse practitioner.

Can I get a vaccine if I am on blood thinners?

Yes. There is no need to stop these important medications. We recommend that pressure be applied to your arm for five minutes after vaccination, if you are taking blood thinners.