

# mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet

## Pfizer-BioNTech/Moderna Vaccines

**Be sure to read this whole sheet carefully before receiving the vaccine.  
Ask a healthcare provider any questions you have before receiving the vaccine.**

### How does mRNA vaccines protect against COVID-19?

The vaccine causes our body to produce protection (such as antibodies) that prevent the COVID-19 virus from entering our cells to make us sick. The vaccine uses a new method messenger RNA - or "mRNA" – which is the genetic code for a piece of the virus that helps our bodies produce protection against the virus.

### Who should get the vaccine?

This vaccine can be used for anyone who meets the age requirement, and no contraindications exist. This includes:

- People who are immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment, or have an autoimmune condition, mRNA vaccines are the preferred vaccines. If these individuals are not able to receive an mRNA vaccine, for example because of an allergy, another COVID-19 vaccine should be offered. More information can be found on the [GNB Vaccine website](#).
- For people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, mRNA vaccines are preferred for use during pregnancy, due to recently published data from a study in the United States indicating the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are safe in pregnant women. More information can be found on the [GNB Vaccine Website](#).
- For people who have already been sick with COVID-19. (Providing they have recovered and are no longer on self-isolation.)

**If you are wondering if the vaccine is right for you**, talk to your healthcare provider.

### You should not get the vaccine if:

- You do not meet the age requirement identified on the [GNB Vaccine Website](#).
- You have received another vaccine in the past 14 days (not a COVID-19 vaccine); or intend to receive another vaccine 4 weeks after your 2nd dose. If you have recently been immunized with a live or inactivated vaccine, it is best to wait at least 14 days afterwards before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Once you receive your COVID-19 vaccine, it is best to wait at least 28 days before getting another live or inactivated vaccine (except in the case a vaccine is needed for post-exposure prophylaxis).
- You are currently experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Wait until your symptoms are resolved and cleared by Public Health then book an appointment to get your vaccine.
- You have a severe allergy to any ingredient in the vaccine, including polyethylene glycol (PEG).
- You had a severe reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine, such as an allergic reaction, and have been advised by a healthcare provider not to get a second dose.
- You are too soon than the recommended interval between your two doses of the COVID-19 Vaccine. Having two COVID-19 doses other than the approved interval (too close or too far apart) could result in unwanted or unknown side effects, reduce the effectiveness of the vaccine and need be repeated. Receiving your second dose at the right time will ensure your safety and the best possible protection for you.

If any of these circumstances apply, please talk to your healthcare provider about your options.

### Tell the healthcare provider if:

- You have fainted or felt faint after receiving past vaccines or medical procedures.
- You have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting.

- **You have a high risk of severe allergic reaction**, i.e. you have had an anaphylaxis reaction to a previous non-COVID vaccine. Arrangements may be made to provide a different vaccine type, or for you to get immunized where advanced medical care can be promptly provided (i.e. hospital).

## How is the vaccine given?

The vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm and will require two doses. If this is your first COVID-19 vaccine, be sure to return for your second dose when indicated.

## What are the common side effects of the vaccine?

Common side effects can develop in the day or two after receiving the vaccine. Although these side effects are not serious to your health, they may make you feel unwell for about one to three days. The side-effects usually will go away on their own.

Common side effects include: pain, redness or swelling where the needle was given tiredness, muscle aches, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, nausea, vomiting, chills or fever. Enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands) in your underarm may also occur.

Rarely, serious symptoms or symptoms of a life-threatening allergic reaction can occur after receiving a vaccine. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy), swelling of your face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing. The clinic staff are prepared to manage an allergic reaction should occur. Notify a clinic staff person immediately if you any of these symptoms after getting the vaccine.

Any serious side-effects or common side-effects that last 72 hours after vaccination should be reported to your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will do an assessment and provide you with medical advice. If your healthcare provider thinks the symptoms are related to the vaccine that was given, Public Health will be consulted.

## Safety Protocols are in place for your Protection

Healthcare providers are being very careful to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when offering immunizations. Examples of extra safety measures include the following:

- Clients will be screened for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) upon arrival. People with symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend the clinic.
- Public Health measures such as physical distancing, mask wearing, and hand hygiene will be followed.
- Staff will be wearing personal protective equipment and will be cleaning their hands before and after each client.
- Other measures may also be put in place. Be sure to read and follow any signs or additional instructions provided.

## What should you do before coming to the clinic?

- Wear a short-sleeve shirt or top with sleeves that are easy to roll up.
- Have something to eat before coming to the clinic.
- Bring your mask.
- Bring any identification required by the clinic, such as your health card.
- If you are returning for your second dose of the vaccine, bring your record of immunization from your first dose. You can download the CANImmunize app to keep track of your vaccinations.

## What should you do after receiving an mRNA vaccine?

- **Wait at the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine** in a space provided for you by the healthcare provider. Longer waiting times may be recommended if there is concern about a possible vaccine allergy. Inform a healthcare provider right away if you feel unwell while waiting.
- **Once you leave the clinic, call 9-1-1 if you develop symptoms of a life-threatening allergic reaction** (i.e. hives, swelling of your

face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing) **or experience any respiratory distress.**

- **Continue to follow Public health measures** (wearing a mask, physical distancing and hand hygiene).
- **If you received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for your first dose, any of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech) can be offered where authorized for your age group.**
- **Do not get a COVID-19 vaccine with any other type of live or inactivated vaccine unless advised by your healthcare provider.** If you have recently been immunized with a live or inactivated vaccine, it is best to wait at least 14 days afterwards before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Once you receive your COVID-19 vaccine, it is best to wait at least 28 days before getting another live or inactivated vaccine (except in the case a vaccine is needed for post-exposure prophylaxis).
- **Keep your immunization record** with information about the COVID-19 vaccine in a safe place.
- **If your side effects mimic COVID-19 symptoms,** stay home until you feel better and get tested if your symptoms last longer than two days.