

COVID-19 mRNA VACCINES

Last updated: October 18, 2022

Primary Series and Boosters

Primary series:

- This is the initial set of doses that protects against COVID-19
- For most people, a primary series is two doses of an mRNA vaccine; for some people, depending on age, health status, and type of vaccine, it can be three doses
- Your primary series of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine will be the Pfizer or Moderna **monovalent** vaccine (protects against one variant of COVID-19, the original variant from 2019)

Boosters:

- This is a dose given at least three to six months after the primary series to help strengthen and lengthen the protection you get from the primary series
- Experience has shown that in addition to the primary series, **booster dose(s)** of the vaccine are needed for better and longer lasting protection. **Everyone five years of age and older should get a booster dose**
- Booster dose(s) **after the primary series** may be either the original vaccine (called the monovalent) or a bivalent vaccine depending on age. **People 12 years of age and older are recommended to get a bivalent booster vaccine** (protects against the original COVID-19 virus from 2019 and an Omicron variant)

Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccines

Monovalent (original strain) vaccine:

- Approved for people six months of age and older (dose varies)
- People six to 29 years of age should receive the Pfizer vaccine for their primary series as it has the lowest risk of the rare conditions, myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the tissue around the heart); people five to 11 years of age receive the Pfizer monovalent vaccine for their booster dose, for the same reason

Bivalent booster vaccine: Original COVID-19 virus strain and Omicron variant (BA4/5)

- Approved for people 12 years of age and older
- This is the recommended bivalent booster shot (over Moderna's) for people 12 to 17 years of age

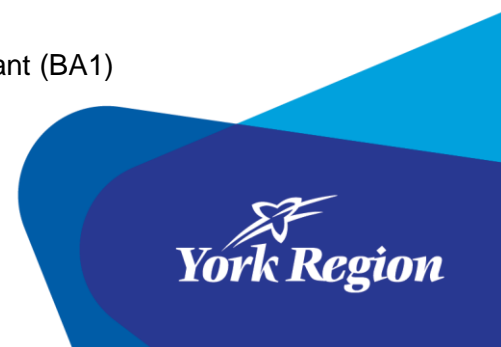
Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines

Monovalent (original strain) vaccine:

- Approved for people six months of age and older (dose varies)
- Can be used for a primary series for anyone age six months to five years of age or anyone over 29 years of age

Bivalent booster vaccine: Original COVID-19 virus strain and Omicron variant (BA1)

- For people 18 years of age and older, or with informed consent for those 12 years of age and older if they are immunocompromised



YOUR VACCINE APPOINTMENT

Do not get this vaccine today, if you:

- Have known severe allergies/reactions to any vaccine ingredients, including polyethylene glycol or tromethamine
- Had a severe allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine until consulting with an allergist
- Developed confirmed myocarditis or pericarditis after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine – speak with your health care provider before receiving your next dose
- Have a fever or any other COVID-19 symptoms and are supposed to be staying home until you're well. You must wait at least three months after having a confirmed COVID-19 infection (i.e., you've tested positive or you have COVID-19 symptoms and been in contact with someone who has tested positive) before getting your next dose of the COVID-19 vaccine

Side Effects and Risks

Some people may have mild side effects from the vaccines. Common side effects include:

- Redness, soreness or swelling on the arm where you got the shot
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- Chills
- Mild fever

Side effects usually last one to three days. The side effects can be a sign that the vaccine is working and your body is developing an immune response. Rarely, serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) can occur. Allergic reactions can be treated and are usually temporary. Serious side effects are rare.

Call your doctor or nurse practitioner or go to the nearest emergency department if you develop any of the following signs within three days of receiving the vaccine:

- Hives
- Swelling of your face or mouth
- Trouble breathing, very pale colour and serious drowsiness
- Shortness of breath, chest pain or palpitations (fast or fluttering heart rate)
- High fever (over 40°C or 104°F)
- Convulsions or seizures
- Other serious symptoms (e.g., “pins and needles” or numbness)

People with food, insect bite, medication or environmental allergies can get the vaccine if they do not have an allergy to any of the vaccine ingredients. If you have allergy concerns, speak with your family health care provider.

When should I return for my next dose?

- If this is your primary series, it is recommended to wait eight weeks between each dose in the series
- After your primary series, you can get booster doses at a recommended interval of six months (168 days), or a minimum interval of three months (84 days), since your last dose regardless of how many previous doses you have had (children five to 11 years of age are only eligible for one booster dose currently)
- Children under five years of age may receive a COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days before or after getting another vaccine
- People five years of age and older may receive a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as, or at any time before or after non-COVID-19 vaccines, including the influenza (or flu) vaccine

For more information, visit york.ca/COVID19Vaccine