

December 13, 2023

Novavax Nuvaxovid COVID-19 Vaccine

An updated [Novavax Nuvaxovid](#) vaccine (XBB) was approved by Health Canada on December 5, 2023, for people 12 years of age and older.

How the Vaccine Works

[Novavax](#) is a 'protein subunit' vaccine that targets the COVID-19 virus by using small pieces of a protein that look like the spikes on the COVID-19 virus. These proteins teach our immune system to make antibodies that recognize and fight COVID-19. The vaccine does not contain the COVID-19 virus and cannot give you the infection.

Vaccine Schedule

A single dose six months after a previous vaccine is recommended for fall/winter 2023. Two doses are recommended to complete a primary series if someone has never received a previous COVID-19 vaccine. It takes two weeks after vaccination for protection.

Delay vaccination if you have COVID-19 or symptoms. Learn about when to get vaccinated [after having COVID-19](#)

Mixing Vaccines

[Novavax](#) can be used to complete a vaccination series, even if the previous vaccine was a different type (e.g. one dose of another COVID-19 vaccine and one dose of [Novavax](#)) or as a booster dose.

Vaccine Benefits

The COVID-19 [mRNA](#) vaccines (e.g. Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna Spikevax) are preferred because they give stronger protection against serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19, including variants. Clinical trials showed that [Novavax](#) works well to prevent getting sick from COVID-19. Long-term protection is not known yet. We also do not know how effective Novavax is for people who have a weak immune system, have an autoimmune condition, had COVID-19 in the past, or are pregnant or

breastfeeding. Speak to a health care provider to know if it is the right vaccine for you.

Side Effects and Risks

Some people may have side effects after vaccination – most are mild to moderate and last one to three days. Side effects usually mean that the vaccine is working. Common side effects include redness, pain, or swelling at the injection site, mild fever, headache, feeling tired, muscle aches, joint pain, chills, nausea and/or vomiting. If you have a serious reaction to the vaccine or the reaction does not go away after three days, tell your health care provider. Public health keeps track of side effects to ensure the vaccines continue to be safe.

Myocarditis and pericarditis are types of inflammation in different parts of the heart. It can occur after getting COVID-19 and can be serious. This has rarely occurred after getting Novavax and is being closely monitored. If it does occur, most cases are mild and treated with medication and rest and get better in a few days.

Get medical attention if you develop chest pain, shortness of breath, or racing heartbeat after vaccination. Vaccination is still recommended as the benefits outweigh the risks.

Vaccine Ingredients and Allergies

The vaccine contains Polysorbate 80, salts, sugars and buffers. It does not contain eggs, gelatin (pork), gluten, latex, preservatives, antibiotics, or aluminum. In rare cases, serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) can occur. Allergic reactions can be treated and are usually temporary. Seek medical attention if you have trouble breathing, hives, or swelling of the face and throat.

People with a serious allergic reaction to another COVID-19 vaccine or polyethylene glycol (PEG) can consider getting [Novavax](#).

Speak with a health care provider first, if you:

- Are pregnant, could be pregnant or are breastfeeding
- Have an autoimmune condition
- Have a weakened immune system because of an illness or treatment

- Had an allergic reaction within four hours after getting the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine
- Have a severe allergy to any [Novavax](#) vaccine ingredients, including an allergy to Polysorbate 80

For more information, talk to your health care provider or visit our website at toronto.ca/COVID19.