



Updated September 2025

COVID-19 – Vaccine Fact Sheet

Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna Spikevax are currently the two approved COVID-19 LP.8.1 vaccines in Ontario. The updated vaccine targets the LP.8.1 strain of the Omicron variant to boost protection against severe COVID-19 and may be better against currently circulating variants.

How the Vaccine Works

The vaccines teach our immune system how to make antibodies that protect us from COVID-19. Vaccines do not stay in the body for a long time, do not contain the COVID-19 virus and cannot give you COVID-19. It takes at least two weeks after getting the vaccine to be protected. Even if you had COVID-19 in the past, it's important to get vaccinated this season as protection decreases over time and vaccines are updated each year to match the new variant/strains expected to spread.

Vaccine Eligibility

All individuals ages six months of age and older are recommended to get the updated COVID-19 vaccine, especially people at higher risk of getting very sick, including pregnant and breastfeeding individuals and seniors.

Vaccinated in the past:

Children six months to four years of age who have completed their COVID-19 vaccination (primary) series and everyone five years of age and older can receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine three months since their last dose or infection. Children six months to four years of age who have not completed their COVID-19 vaccination (primary) series, can get their next dose(s) at eight weeks apart.

Not vaccinated in the past:

- Children six months to four years of age should get two doses of the updated Moderna vaccine at least 8 weeks apart.
- Individuals five years of age and older should get one dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine.

Delay Vaccination:

Individuals who have a fever or illness more serious than a cold should delay getting their COVID-19 vaccine until they are symptom-free.



Vaccine Ingredients and Allergies

The vaccines contain lipids (fats), salts, sugars, and buffers. They do not contain egg, gelatin (pork), gluten, latex, preservatives, antibiotics, or aluminum. Allergies to the COVID-19 vaccines are rare. The vaccines are safe and people with allergies, including serious allergies to food, medications and insect bites can get the vaccines. Talk to a health care provider first if you are allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG) or tromethamine (Tris).

Serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) are rare. Allergic reactions can be treated and are usually temporary. People are monitored for 15 minutes after vaccination for any reactions. Get medical help if you have trouble breathing or have hives or swelling in the face and throat, hoarseness, wheezing, high fever (over 40°C), seizures within four hours of getting the vaccine.

Side Effects and Risks

Most side effects are mild and last for one to three days. Side effects usually mean that the vaccine is working. Common side effects include redness, swelling, and soreness where the needle was given, fever, feeling tired, and achy muscles or joints.

Severe side effects are rare. If you have a serious reaction to the vaccine or the reaction does not go away after three days, contact a health care provider. Public health keeps track of side effects to ensure vaccine safety.

Getting other vaccines at the same time

It is safe and convenient to get the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time, before or after a flu vaccine, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) immunization, and any other routine vaccines.

For more information: Talk to a health care provider or visit toronto.ca/COVID19.