

# What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine

## What is the COVID-19 vaccine?

- The COVID-19 vaccine protects you from getting sick from the virus that causes COVID-19. This is important because COVID-19 can cause severe sickness or death.
- The vaccine does not contain a live virus. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.



Getting the COVID-19 vaccine can protect you and builds community immunity.

## How does the vaccine work?

1

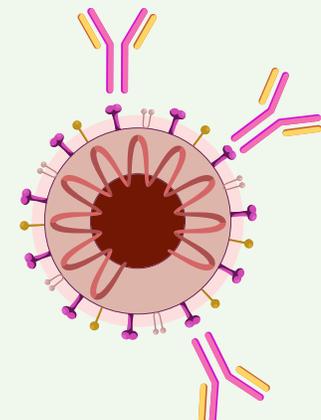
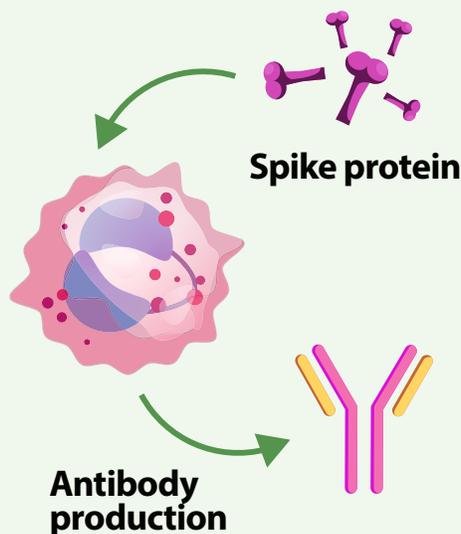
The vaccine is injected into the muscle of your arm by a health care professional trained in administering vaccines.

2

Your body creates a special protein called a spike protein. The spike protein triggers your immune system to make antibodies that can fight the COVID-19 virus.

3

If you are exposed to the COVID-19 virus in the future, your immune system will be prepared to fight off the virus to reduce the odds of you getting sick or reduce the effects of the virus.



## How was the COVID-19 vaccine approved in Canada?

- Health Canada has approved two COVID-19 vaccines for use in Canada so far, the **Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine** and the **Moderna vaccine**.
- Clinical trials tested the vaccines for safety and effectiveness on thousands of people.
- mRNA vaccine technology used in the COVID-19 vaccine is not new and has been used in research trials for many years.
- The COVID-19 vaccines were approved quickly because of:



**Increased funding**



**International collaboration among scientists, governments and industry**



**Advances in science and technology**



**Health Canada has approved the COVID-19 vaccine because evidence shows that they are safe, effective and of good quality.**

## What are the normal side effects to expect after receiving the vaccine?

Some mild side effects are common after you get the COVID-19 vaccine, such as pain at the injection site, muscle soreness or headache. These side effects are more common after the second dose and are normal signs that your body is building protection. Serious side effects after receiving the vaccine are rare.

## How effective are the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines?



Both approved vaccines are highly effective in protecting against COVID-19.



If you are concerned about getting the vaccine due to any underlying health conditions or medications that you are currently taking, **talk with your doctor before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.**

For more information about COVID-19, visit [halton.ca/COVIDvaccines](https://www.halton.ca/COVIDvaccines) or call 311.