

COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine Information

AGES 12+

Please read this information sheet carefully and ensure all your questions have been answered by a health-care provider before receiving the vaccine.

Please note there is a separate sheet for the Pfizer vaccine for 5 to 11 year olds.

How do mRNA vaccines work?

- mRNA vaccines teach your body to protect itself against COVID-19 without getting sick from the virus.
- The vaccine causes our body to produce antibodies to help keep us from becoming sick if we are exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

How are the vaccines given?

- You need 2 (sometimes 3) doses of mRNA vaccines to get full protection. This is called your primary series. You will receive the vaccines in your upper arm (deltoid muscle).
- both Pfizer (Comirnaty) and Moderna (Spikevax) first and second doses are recommended to be given 8 weeks apart. Emerging evidence shows that intervals of 8 weeks between the first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccine result in more robust and durable immune response and higher vaccine effectiveness.
- Booster doses: are given 6 months after the completion of the primary series.

What are the benefits of the vaccine?

- The vaccines are the best way to protect against COVID-19 infection.
- In clinical trials the vaccine prevented people from becoming sick with COVID-19 and from severe illness (hospitalization and death) with:
 - 95% efficacy for people aged 18 and older, and
 - 100% efficacy for people aged 12-17.

Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine?

In Yukon, there are three different types of mRNA vaccines available:

- Moderna (Spikevax) is available to adults 30 years of age and older.
- Pfizer (Comirnaty) vaccine is available to youth and adults aged 12-29.
- Pfizer (Comirnaty) pediatric vaccine is available to children 5 - 11 years of age.

Clients who are pregnant, breastfeeding, immunocompromised, or have an autoimmune condition, can get the vaccine. If you have questions, have a discussion with your health care provider about risks and benefits to help you make a decision.

Who should NOT get the vaccine?

- Anyone with symptoms that could be due to COVID-19 should wait to be vaccinated so that they do not spread infection to others at the vaccine clinic. Talk with a health-care provider, call 811, or arrange to get tested for COVID-19.
- Anyone with a known allergy to polyethylene glycol (PEG)* or who has had an allergic reaction from an unknown cause.
- People who had a serious or allergic reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine should talk to their health-care provider before getting their 2nd dose.

Note – people age 5 to 11 can get the pediatric version of the Pfizer vaccine. We have a separate information sheet on this vaccine. It is available at yukon.ca/en/vaccine-information-5to11

* Polyethylene glycol (PEG) can rarely cause allergic reactions. It is found in products such as medications, bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrups, cosmetics, skin creams, medical products used on the skin and during operations, toothpaste, contact lenses and contact lens solution. PEG also can be found in foods or drinks, but is not known to cause allergic reactions from foods or drinks.

**A third dose of vaccine is recommended for some people who have a weakened immune system, as they may not develop a strong immune response to the vaccine.

Note: Rare cases of inflammation of the heart (myocarditis and pericarditis) have been reported after getting the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines. In Canada, this has occurred at a rate of about 3 cases per 100,000 doses of Moderna (Spikevax) vaccine and 1.9 cases per 100,000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) vaccine. Cases are seen more often after the second dose and in males 12-29 years of age. The rate of cases in males 18-29 years of age after the second dose are about 6 times higher with the Moderna (Spikevax) vaccine compared to the Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) vaccine.

This is why Pfizer is being recommended as the vaccine of choice for those under 30 years of age.

This very rare reaction was not observed during the Pfizer (Comirnaty) clinical trials for those age 5 to 11.

For more information visit www.yukon.ca/en/heart-inflammation-and-covid-19-mrna-vaccine