VACCINE INFORMATION SHEET
COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine

Moderna's Spikevax and Pfizer-BioNTech's Comirnaty are two different brands of messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines. This type of vaccine teaches your body to protect itself against COVID-19 without getting sick from the virus.

Vaccines make your immune system stronger by helping build antibodies to prevent specific infectious diseases. For high-risk individuals, the benefits of getting vaccinated outweighs the risk.

How do mRNA vaccines work?

mRNA vaccines send messages to your cells to teach them how to make a harmless protein, like the one found on the surface of a virus. Once this protein is made, it triggers your immune system to make antibodies so that your body can recognize and fight the COVID-19 virus.

mRNA vaccines are different from other vaccines because they do not contain any weakened or dead virus. After the antibodies are made, your body gets rid of the mRNA and protein naturally.

Who can get the vaccine?

A health care provider will consult with you regarding your personal health and risk status prior to administering an immunization.

Who should NOT get the vaccine?

Both mRNA vaccines are safe and effective for most of the population except for those who have had severe allergic reactions from previous mRNA vaccines. If you have any concerns regarding the vaccine, consult with a health care provider prior to receiving an immunization.

What else can I do to stay healthy?

Whether you are vaccinated or not, everyone should keep up with things like:

- Washing your hands often.
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Cleaning and disinfecting your home regularly.
- Wearing non-medical masks when sick.

What should I do after getting the vaccine?

It is very important to stick around for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine in case you have a severe reaction such as **hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue, or lips**.

What are possible side effects from the vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine, like all medications, can have side effects or reactions. Most side effects or reactions should only last a few days.

Common side effects to the COVID-19 vaccine are:

- Headache
- Muscle or joint pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Pain, redness or swelling where the vaccine was given
- Swelling and tenderness in the arm pit
- Fatigue

To help with side effects, use a cool cloth over the sore arm and ask your health care provider if you can take medication like acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain and fever.

Rarely, cases of inflammation of the heart (myocarditis and pericarditis) have been reported after getting mRNA covid vaccines, especially in males under the age of 30. Symptoms of myocarditis and pericarditis typically appear within a week after receiving the vaccine and are usually mild and treated with medication and rest. If you or your child experience any shortness of breath, chest pain, or a feeling of a rapid or abnormal health rhythm (palpitations), contact your health care provider immediately.

For a comprehensive list of reported side effects, please consult: COVID-19 vaccine safety: Report on side effects following immunization- Canada.ca.

Reporting adverse events following immunization

If you have concerns about any symptoms you develop after getting the vaccine, contact your health care provider. To report a potential adverse event after getting the COVID-19 vaccine, contact your health care provider or a nurse at your local public health unit or community health centre.