

# COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet

## Pfizer-BioNTech

**Be sure to read this whole sheet carefully before receiving the vaccine.  
Ask a health care provider any questions you have before receiving the vaccine.**

### What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new virus (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 was recognized for the first time in December 2019 and has since spread around the world to cause a pandemic. COVID-19 can be passed from an infected person to others when the infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks or breathes. Infected people can spread the infection even if they have no symptoms.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, tiredness and loss of smell or taste. Some people infected with the virus have no symptoms at all, while others have symptoms that range from mild to severe.

Of people diagnosed with COVID-19 in Canada, about 1 in 13 require hospitalization and about 3 out of every 100 people diagnosed with COVID-19 die. Even people with mild symptoms may feel unwell for a long time after a COVID-19 infection.

### How does the Pfizer - BioNTech vaccine protect against COVID-19?

The vaccine causes our body to produce protection (such as antibodies) that prevent the COVID-19 virus from entering our cells to make us sick. The vaccine uses a new method messenger RNA –(mRNA) which is the genetic code for a piece of the virus that helps our bodies make protection against the virus. In a large study, the vaccine was shown to work very well at preventing people from becoming sick with COVID-19 (the vaccinated group of people was 95% less likely to get sick compared to the group that did not receive the vaccine).

### Who should get the vaccine?

The vaccine can be used for anyone 16 years of age and over. Even if you have already had a COVID-19 infection, you should still receive the vaccine. Public health officials will provide information on which groups of people are able to receive the vaccine at this time based on several factors including the amount of vaccine available.

- The vaccine can be given during pregnancy or breastfeeding if a risk assessment deems that the benefits outweigh the potential risks for the individual and the fetus; and, if informed consent includes discussion about the absence of evidence on the use of COVID-19 vaccine in this population. Talk to your Healthcare Provider.
- Individuals with auto-immune diseases or who take auto-immune medications can be given the vaccine if a risk assessment deems that the benefits outweigh the potential risks for the individual and if informed consent includes discussion about the absence of evidence on the use of COVID-19 vaccine in this population. Talk to your Healthcare Provider.

### Who should not get the vaccine?

- Those less than 16 years of age should not receive the vaccine at this time. This may change in the future as more information becomes available
- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization has advised that it is prudent to avoid pregnancy for at least 28 days after the second dose of vaccine.
- You received another vaccine in the past 14 days (not a COVID-19 vaccine); or intend to receive another vaccine 4 weeks after your 2nd dose. Of note, and in certain urgent circumstances, a person can receive post exposure prophylaxis vaccines like rabies or meningitis as the benefits outweigh the risks.
- If you feel ill or have any symptoms that could be due to COVID-19, you should not go out to get vaccinated because you could spread the

infection to others. Talk with your healthcare provider, or call the NB 811 health information line about your symptoms and getting a COVID-19 test. Your healthcare provider will advise you when you are able to receive the vaccine.

- If you have been told you are allergic to polyethylene glycol (PEG), talk with your healthcare provider. \* Although it is rare, Polyethylene glycol (PEG) can cause allergic reactions and 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.
- You had a severe reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine, including an allergic reaction.

In addition to the information above, tell the healthcare provider if:

- You have fainted or felt faint after receiving past vaccines or medical procedures. Your healthcare provider may recommend that you receive the vaccine lying down to prevent fainting.
- You have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting. This information will help the healthcare provider prevent bleeding or bruising from the needle.

## How is the vaccine administered?

The vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm and will require two doses given at least 28 days apart.

## What are the risks and side effects of the vaccine?

- Side effects can develop in the day or two after receiving the vaccine. Although these side effects are not serious to your health, they may make you feel unwell for about one to three days; they will go away on their own. These types of side effects are expected and can indicate the vaccine is working to produce protection.
- In the study, side effects included one or more of the following:
  - » pain, redness or swelling where the needle was given
  - » tiredness
  - » headache
  - » muscle pain
  - » joint pain
  - » nausea / vomiting
  - » chills
  - » fever
  - » enlarged lymph nodes (swollen glands) in the underarm.
- Rarely allergic reactions can occur after receiving a vaccine. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy), swelling of your face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing. The clinic staff are prepared to manage an allergic reaction should it occur. Seek immediate medical care if you develop any of these symptoms.
- It is important to note that you cannot get COVID-19 infection from the vaccine.

## What measures have been put in place to safely provide immunizations during COVID-19?

Healthcare providers are being very careful to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when offering immunizations. Examples of extra safety measures include the following:

- You will be asked about any [COVID-19 symptoms](#) when you arrive at the clinic. People with symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend the clinic.
- You will be asked to wear a mask while at the clinic, as well as to clean your hands, and to stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others (except those you live with).
- The staff will also be wearing personal protective equipment and will be cleaning their hands before and after each client.

- Other measures may also be put in place in clinics. Be sure to read and follow any signs or instructions provided.

## What should you do before coming to the clinic?

- Wear a short-sleeve shirt or top with sleeves that are easy to roll up.
- To prevent feeling faint while being vaccinated, have something to eat before coming to the clinic.
- Bring your mask.
- Bring any identification required by the clinic, such as your health card.
- Bring your immunization record with you and/or download the [CANImmunize](#) app to keep track of this and other vaccines.

## What should you do after receiving the vaccine?

- You will be asked to **wait at least 15 minutes after receiving** the vaccine to be sure you are feeling well. Longer waiting times of 30 minutes may be recommended if there is concern about a possible vaccine allergy. You may be asked by the healthcare provider to wait in the clinic, or if an adult is with you and you have a warm, dry place to wait (such as in your vehicle), you may be asked to wait outside of the clinic. Inform a healthcare provider right away if you feel unwell while waiting. You should not leave the clinic (or clinic parking lot) for at least 15 to 30 minutes after receiving your vaccine, based on the recommendation of the healthcare provider.
- **Once you leave the clinic, call 9-1-1 right away if you develop any serious symptoms or symptoms of an allergic reaction** such as hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy), swelling of your face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing. Inform your healthcare provider of any concerning side effects after receiving the vaccine.
- **Continue to follow the recommendations of local public health officials** to prevent spread of COVID-19, which may include wearing a mask, staying at least 2 metres from others and limiting / avoiding contact with others outside your household.
- **Do not receive any other vaccines (except for your second COVID-19 vaccine)** until you have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccines and at least 28 days have passed after the second dose (unless considered necessary by your healthcare provider).
- **If you are planning to become pregnant**, delay this until at least 28 days have passed after the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Keep your immunization record with information about the COVID-19 vaccine in a safe place.
- **If your side effects mimic COVID-19 symptoms**, stay home until you feel better and get tested if your symptoms last longer than two days.

## When should I return for my second dose?

- If this is your first COVID-19 vaccine, be sure to return for your second dose when indicated. Doses are provided at least 28 days apart. You may be asked to book an appointment to receive the next dose or follow the instructions given to you by the healthcare provider. Bring your immunization record with you when you come for your next dose in 28 days.

**If you have any questions, please speak with the person providing the vaccine or contact:**

<b>Zone 1 - Moncton</b>	<b>506-856-2401</b>
<b>Zone 2 - Saint John</b>	<b>506-658-2454</b>
<b>Zone 3 - Fredericton</b>	<b>506-453-5200</b>
<b>Zone 4 - Edmundston</b>	<b>506-735-2065</b>
<b>Zone 5 - Campbellton</b>	<b>506-789-2266</b>
<b>Zone 6 - Bathurst</b>	<b>506-547-2062</b>
<b>Zone 7 - Miramichi</b>	<b>506-778-6102</b>