

# GET PROTECTED

COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION

BC's vaccination program is underway and all individuals aged 12 and over are eligible for vaccination. Learn more about the COVID-19 vaccines, how you can receive your first vaccine shot, what to expect, and some facts and myths surrounding COVID-19 vaccination.

## How Will I Get Vaccinated?

There are pop-up vaccine clinics throughout the CRD, including at some housing sites. For information about vaccine outreach clinics in Victoria, please call 250-480-8995.



You can also register for a vaccination at [gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated](https://gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated) or call 1-833-838-2323 and leave a phone number or email address where you can be contacted.

## What is the Covid-19 Vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19, and this protects you from getting sick with COVID-19. After two doses, COVID-19 vaccines are up to 95% effective. After one dose, the vaccine is more than 90% effective. Studies suggest that even if an infection does develop, people who have been vaccinated experience milder symptoms.

## Should I Get Vaccinated?

Vaccines save lives. Vaccines don't just protect the people getting vaccinated; they protect everyone around them too. The more people in a community who are vaccinated and therefore protected from COVID-19, the harder it is for the virus to spread and mutate. And that means we will once again be able to connect with our friends, family, and support groups in person.

Although highly recommended, getting vaccinated is a voluntary and personal choice. No one can force you to take the vaccine. If you have questions or concerns, health and peer support workers can provide you with information to help you make an informed decision.

## What Should I Expect?

- Avoid taking painkillers (Advil/Tylenol) before your shot, unless medically prescribed.
- Wear a mask and loose-fitting clothing – the vaccine is given by injection in the shoulder area.
- Provide your name and birthdate to staff or bring your Personal Health Number if you have one.
- Wait at least 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine to make sure you don't have an allergic reaction.
- You may experience soreness where you were injected or mild flu-like symptoms after receiving the vaccine. This is a normal response to your body building immunity.
- Keep your record of immunization (date and vaccine administered) to register for your second dose.

**Be Safe. Be Aware. Be Informed.**

## Facts & Myths

- Can a COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?**  
None of the COVID-19 vaccines approved by Health Canada contain the live virus, so you cannot become infected from the vaccine. It typically takes two weeks for the body to build an immune response, so it is still possible to contract COVID-19 during that period through community spread.
- If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine?**  
COVID-19 is a new virus, so there is not yet enough information about how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. You can receive the vaccine if you are currently or recently infected with COVID-19, as long as you are not experiencing severe symptoms.
- Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?**  
Vaccines deliver information to our cells that help them recognize the COVID-19 virus and trigger an immune reaction, but they do not interact directly or change our DNA.
- Is the vaccine safe if I use other drugs, including illicit ones?**  
Although vaccines and medications can sometimes affect each other, these interactions don't usually cause big problems. The main risk of an adverse reaction is if you are allergic to any of the vaccine components. Immunosuppressive drugs could decrease the efficacy of the vaccine. If you are taking drugs that suppress your immune system or have had an allergic reaction to a vaccine before, please talk to your doctor.
- Will I still need to wear a mask and practice physical distancing if I've had the vaccine?**  
No vaccine is 100% effective, so it's important to protect individuals at risk and those who are unable to get vaccinated by washing your hands, staying 2 metres apart, and wearing your mask in indoor settings. The Delta variant has had breakthroughs in fully vaccinated individuals, but the vast majority of serious cases and hospitalizations have been in people who are unvaccinated.
- Will the COVID-19 vaccine plant a microchip in my brain?**  
There is no microchip in the vaccine, and the vaccine will not track people.

There will be a medical digital record with Public Health that you have been vaccinated, and as of September 13 you will be required to present the BC Vaccine Card as proof of vaccination to access some events, services, and businesses. Get your BC Vaccine Card here: [www2.gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard.html](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard.html).

Every BC Vaccine Card comes with a unique QR code. BC is using the SMART Health Card QR code format, a requirement of the federal government. This means the QR code only stores the absolute minimum level of information and is not connected to other health records.

## Still Unsure? Ask a medical professional that you trust.

Think of a medical professional you trust, someone who does your health care, writes or fills your prescriptions, or provides other health services to you. Talk to them and ask questions. They may not have all the answers, but they can help you find them.

**Be Safe. Be Aware. Be Informed.**