

COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION SHEET

Individuals should receive a COVID-19 booster:

- Every six months if aged 65 years or older
- Every six months if aged 18 years or older and severely immunocompromised
- All other adults should receive a dose of COVID-19 vaccine once every 12 months

The current COVID-19 vaccine targets the most recent strains of COVID-19 that are circulating in the community.

You will be assessed by a nurse immuniser prior to being offered the vaccine at your workplace clinic to check that this vaccine is both suitable and recommended for you at the time.

About the COVID-19 Vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccine is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. This type of vaccine uses a genetic code called RNA to make your body's cells produce the coronavirus' specific spike protein. Your immune system cells then recognise the spike protein as a threat and builds an immune response against COVID-19. The RNA from the vaccine does not change your DNA in any way, and your body quickly breaks it down.

Benefits of vaccination

Very large clinical trials have shown that COVID-19 vaccines are effective in preventing COVID-19. Adults who receive a booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine are significantly less likely to experience severe illness from COVID-19 than people who did not receive a booster dose.

COVID-19 vaccination is safe and effective for:

- People who are immunocompromised
- People who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy.

Prior to getting vaccinated, please talk to your GP or our nurse at the clinic if you have had:

- an allergic reaction or serious adverse event to a previous dose or to a component of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer)
- anaphylaxis to other vaccines or to other medications
- Confirmed mastocytosis with recurrent anaphylaxis that requires treatment
- a bleeding disorder or you are taking a blood-thinning medication (anticoagulant)
- Myocarditis and/or pericarditis after a previous COVID-19 vaccine
- Recent (i.e. within the past 3 months) myocarditis or pericarditis
- Acute rheumatic fever or acute rheumatic heart disease
- Heart failure.

Common side effects

The COVID-19 vaccine is a very safe vaccine. It has been given to millions of people around the world. As with any vaccine, you may have some temporary side effects after receiving your vaccine. This shows your immune system is working.

Common side effects after the COVID-19 vaccine include:

- pain at the injection site
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- fever and chills
- joint pain.

Less common side effects after the COVID-19 vaccine include:

- redness or swelling at the injection site
- swelling or tenderness in the armpit
- nausea/vomiting
- enlarged lymph nodes.

Most side effects are mild and go away within 2 or 3 days.

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Rare side effects

Rare side effects after the COVID -19 vaccine are severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis), myocarditis and pericarditis.

In rare cases, myocarditis (inflammation of the heart) and pericarditis (inflammation of the membrane around the heart) can develop after vaccination with a COVID-19 vaccine. These rare effects on the heart typically occur:

- within 1 to 5 days of vaccination
- more often in men aged under 40 but they can occur in any gender, at any age, and after any dose.

Most cases have mild symptoms and recover well.

When to seek help

Contact a doctor or go to hospital immediately if you develop any of the following symptoms after a COVID-19 vaccination:

- chest pain
- pressure or discomfort in the chest
- irregular, skipped heartbeats or 'fluttering'
- fainting
- shortness of breath
- pain when breathing.

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