



## COVID-19 Vaccination Fact Sheet January 11, 2021

### Overview:

- Two COVID-19 vaccines have been approved by Health Canada, they are the Pfizer vaccine and the Moderna vaccine.
- Both vaccines are approved by Health Canada's rigorous safety system. They are tested to be safe, effective, and will save lives.
- The vaccine not only protects the persons vaccinated, but the people around them. The more people are vaccinated in the community, the harder it is for the virus to spread.
- The COVID-19 vaccines will be free for everyone in British Columbia who is eligible to receive it.
- Certain groups of people are not recommended to receive the vaccine at this time.
- The distribution of the vaccine is planned and underway. Priority groups are scheduled to be vaccinated from now to March. General population is scheduled to follow the priority groups.

### Details:

#### **1. Vaccine safety**

- Feeling worried or hesitant is completely normal when something is new.
- Health Canada has a thorough approval process to make sure the vaccines are safe.
  - Increased resources and collaboration allowed the vaccines to be developed quickly.
  - The COVID-19 vaccines have been tested in a range of people, including adults from a range of ages including older adults, people with stable underlying chronic diseases, and people from a range of ethnic backgrounds.
  - Once a vaccine begins to be used, safety and effectiveness is continuously monitored.

#### **2. Side effects and contradictions**

- After receiving the vaccines, some people develop short-term, mild to moderate side effects.
  - The side effects include:
    - Mild to moderate fatigue and in some cases chills
    - Pain or swelling at the injection site
    - Headache or joint pain

- These are all normal side effects, and may look like those experienced after getting a flu shot.
- People allergic to any ingredients in the vaccines are advised to not receive the vaccine at this time.
  - It is recommended that those with allergic reactions to another vaccine, drug or food to speak with a healthcare professional before getting vaccinated.
- Children, pregnant people, and immunocompromised people.
  - Neither vaccines are approved for use in children and pregnant people. It is not recommended that they get the vaccines at this time.
  - People with underlying health conditions, undergoing certain treatments or on certain medications may not be recommended to receive the COVID-19 vaccines at this time.
  - For some people in these groups, the benefit of receiving the vaccine may outweigh the risk. It is recommended that you talk to a professional healthcare provider to make the decision on getting vaccinated.

### **3. Vaccine distribution and cost**

- Public Health will arrange for priority groups to be vaccinated. No action is required on your part.
  - From December 2020 to February 2021, the first groups to get vaccinated include workers and residents of long-term care or assisted living residences, front-line healthcare workers, and remote indigenous communities.
  - From February to March, the immunization program will expand to community-based seniors (85+), indigenous seniors (65+) and elders, people without homes or using shelters, provincial correctional facilities, adults in group homes or mental health residential care, long-term home support recipients and staff, hospital staff, community GPs and medical specialists, and other indigenous communities.
- Following all priority groups, all BC residents who are recommended to get vaccinated can receive the vaccines.
  - Everyone who is recommended for the vaccine will get the vaccine by the end of 2021. No action is required on your part.
- The COVID-19 vaccines will be free for anyone who is recommended to receive it.

### **4. Provincial Health Officer orders and guidelines remain in place for everyone, regardless if they have received the vaccine or not.**

- We are still learning about how our immune systems respond to COVID-19 and how long immunity lasts after getting the vaccine.
- Even though some people will be receiving the vaccine soon, it is still important to follow public health orders.
  - Wash your hands regularly
  - Practice physical and social distancing
  - Wear a mask
  - Stay home when sick

Information on this fact sheet is compiled from the BCCDC and Health Canada websites. It is recommended that you seek detailed information about COVID-19 and the vaccine from these reliable sources and your healthcare provider.

BCCDC:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/covid-19-vaccination-at-a-glance>

Health Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines.html>