# What seniors need to know about COVID-19 vaccinations

**Adults age 80 and over are the next priority group in the Phase 1 population to be vaccinated. After this group, older adults will be vaccinated in decreasing five-year increments beginning with those 79 years of age. More information about the Province's vaccination program can be found on the Province's website: https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccines-ontario.**

## Why should I get vaccinated?

The vaccine will protect you from getting sick with COVID-19. Some people can get very ill from COVID-19, needing hospital care.

## How do vaccines work?

The vaccine tells our body to make antibodies. The antibodies will protect us from getting sick if we are exposed to COVID-19. The vaccine does not have the virus, so you cannot catch COVID-19 by getting the vaccine.

## What COVID-19 vaccines are available for seniors?

Currently, there are several approved vaccines for seniors. The vaccines can protect you from getting very sick from COVID-19. More information about the vaccines are available on the City's website: https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-protect-yourself-others/covid-19-vaccines/.

## How long will I be protected if I am vaccinated?

At this time, we don't know how long the vaccine will protect you from COVID-19. If the protection goes down after vaccination, a booster dose can be provided.

## I have chronic health issues; can I get vaccinated?

All COVID-19 vaccines are safe for seniors and people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart and respiratory disease. People with a weak immune system due to an illness or medications should speak to their health care provider first.

## I have allergies, can I get vaccinated?

The mRNA vaccines that will be given to seniors do not contain antibiotics, latex, eggs, animal products, or blood products. People with severe allergies to any vaccine ingredient should

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speak to their health care provider first. You will be observed for 15 minutes after getting the vaccine to watch for any reactions. A detailed list of ingredients in each vaccine is available on the City's website: https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-protect-yourself-others/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-about-the-vaccines/

## If I had COVID-19, do I still need the vaccine?

Yes. Natural immunity from having COVID-19 may not last long. It is possible to get COVID-19 again. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should wait until they are feeling better, and not in self-isolation, before getting the vaccine.

## Will the vaccine make me sick?

The vaccine does not contain the virus so it cannot give you COVID-19. The vaccine may cause side effects similar to other vaccines (e.g. flu shot). Reactions usually last for only a few days. Look for:

- redness, pain or swelling where the needle was given
- headache, feeling tired, muscle aches, joint pain
- fever, chills, nausea, vomiting
- pain or swelling under the armpit or enlarged lymph nodes (less common)

Side effects are more common after the second dose. If you have reactions lasting more than a few days, talk to your health care provider.

## Can I go back to normal life after vaccination?

It may take up to two weeks after vaccination for your body to build good immunity against COVID-19. We also need to wait until most people are vaccinated to get herd immunity. Therefore, you need to continue with public health measures like wearing a mask, physical distancing, and staying home when you are sick until more people are vaccinated.

## Where do I go to get vaccinated?

Toronto's health sector, including Toronto Public Health, Ontario Health Teams and hospitals, pharmacies and primary care providers are working together closely to deliver vaccine to residents as quickly as possible as supply becomes available. City-operated immunization clinics are just one piece of the immunization plan for Toronto – there will be many opportunities for vaccination for all residents.  Updates about the vaccination roll-out in Toronto will be posted to the City's website: https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-protect-yourself-others/covid-19-vaccines/

## Have questions?

Speak with your health care provider or visit toronto.ca/COVID19 for more information.