

# COVID-19 Vaccine Update



**Vaccines save lives. Vaccines don't just protect the people getting vaccinated; they can protect everyone around them too.** Vaccines are a critical way to limit the spread of the virus. They are effective and safe for protecting your health, as well as the health of family and community members. The more people in a community who are vaccinated and therefore protected from COVID-19, the harder it is for it to spread.

**Vaccines save lives.** Until extensive immunization is achieved, public health measures will continue to be essential to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in Canada and save lives. As we begin the process to get as many Canadians vaccinated as possible, all health protocols must continue for the foreseeable future:

- Stay home if you are feeling sick
- Wash or sanitize your hands often
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched
- Practice physical distancing
- Wear a mask or face covering when leaving the house

**Vaccination is a personal choice.** It's important to ask questions so you can understand the facts about all vaccines for yourself and make the best decision for you, your family and your community. **ISC-AB recommends any individuals who are hesitant to being vaccinated to speak to their family doctor.**

## QUICK FACTS about the COVID-19 Vaccine

- **COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.**
- **Free vaccines will be available to everyone who lives in Canada over the course of 2021.**
- **Vaccines are products that produce immunity to a specific virus like COVID-19. When you are immune to COVID-19 that means you may be able to not get infected or if you do become infected, it can prevent more severe illness.**

## Online Resources

- [NACI](#)
- [Indigenous Services Canada \(ISC\) –Vaccine Page](#)
- [AHS Vaccine Info](#)
- [Government of Canada Site on COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

# Alberta Cases:

as of January 26<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 p.m. MST

<b>AB Total Confirmed (Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> – 366 new cases)</b>	<b>121,901</b>
<b>AB Recovered Cases</b>	<b>111,662</b>
<b>Confirmed First Nations On-reserve Cases</b>	<b>4,958</b>
<b>On-reserve Recovered Cases</b>	<b>3,814</b>
<b>On-Reserve Active Cases</b>	<b>1,105</b>
<b>Calgary Zone Confirmed</b>	<b>46,725</b>
<b>Central Zone Confirmed</b>	<b>8,611</b>
<b>Edmonton Zone Confirmed</b>	<b>50,856</b>
<b>North Zone Confirmed</b>	<b>9,853</b>
<b>South Zone Confirmed</b>	<b>5,725</b>
<b>Unknown Confirmed</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Deaths due to COVID-19</b>	<b>1,587</b>
<b>On-reserve Deaths due to COVID-19</b>	<b>39</b>

## COVID-19 Variant Cases

Mutations in the COVID-19 virus over time are expected. AH is monitoring for variant strains of COVID-19 that have a higher infection rate but not associated with more severe outcomes. AH is updating case numbers weekly. As of January 25, Alberta has detected:

- 20 cases of the variant first identified in the United Kingdom
- 5 cases of the variant first identified in South Africa

All but one of these cases were related to international travel. However, the vaccines have shown effectiveness against the new variants. The Government of Alberta is enhancing capacity to do genetic analysis on samples and variant case numbers will be updated [weekly](#).

## Regional Snapshot



More Alberta case data can be found [here](#)

## Useful Links

### Vaccine Update Recording:

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, ISC officials provided an update and discussed Vaccinations for First Nations in Alberta. The session was recorded and available [here](#).

### Epidemiological summary of COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities:

Epidemic curves of COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities are available online & updated weekly. For information on the total reported and recovered cases, newly reported and active cases, and a breakdown of cases by age and gender: <http://ow.ly/FErF50DhQVO>

### Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic:

Providing same day care to rural and urban indigenous people residing in Alberta via secure video or phone service. Call **1.888.342.4822** to book your appointment.

Hours: Mon - Fri 8:30am-4:30pm, Sat - Sun 12:30pm - 4:30pm or Visit the website [aivcc.ca](http://aivcc.ca) for more information

### Reminder: ISC Weekly COVID Vaccine Update:

ISC will run an vaccine information session every Tuesday from 1-1:30pm. These will be hosted by Dr. Parminder Thiara and Christina Smith. Contact your Community Liaison Team for more info.

## COVID-19: How vaccines are developed

Vaccines are the most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious disease, but developing one can be costly, long, and complex. However, with significant investment and collaboration at a global scale, developing a vaccine is possible in a much shorter period of time. All vaccines go through three basic stages of development: the exploratory stage, the pre-clinical stage, and the clinical stage. The first COVID-19 vaccine trials in humans started in March of 2020. Since then, tens of thousands of volunteers have been enrolled in clinical studies worldwide. Health Canada is responsible for regulating the use of vaccines in Canada. Before approving a new vaccine, they look closely at all of the data on it, paying very close attention to its safety. Only those that are proven safe, effective, and of high quality will be approved for use in Canada.

**Click [here for Vaccine development and approval in Canada Fact Sheet](#)**

**Click here for [COVID-19: How vaccines are developed](#) video**

**[Get the facts on vaccine safety and vaccine side effects to help address your concerns](#)**

## COVID-19: Vaccine Questions & Answers for Health-Care Practitioners

Created by Alberta Health, you will find answers to several questions, including:

- How effective is the vaccine?
- What do I do if I experience the expected reactions that are similar to the symptoms of COVID- 19 that require isolation?
- Is it recommended to receive the vaccine while pregnant?
- Will healthcare workers who are not immunized be excluded from work if they do not get immunized or if there is a COVID-19 Outbreak in the workplace?

**Click here for [Vaccine Questions & Answers for Health-Care Practitioners](#)**

## Vaccine FAQ of the Day

**Q: Which COVID-19 vaccines are approved for use in Canada?**

**A: To date, two COVID-19 vaccines are approved by Health Canada:**

- [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) received approval on Dec. 9, 2020.
- [Moderna](#) received approval on Dec. 23, 2020.

Many potential drugs and vaccines are being investigated in Canada and around the world for use against COVID-19. The Government of Canada is closely tracking all potential drugs and vaccines in development.

## Contact Info

Should you have any immediate questions please submit to the ISC-AB Communicable Disease Emergency Inbox ([sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)). All questions will be re-directed and responded to accordingly.

## What do I need to know about the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine?

- The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is the second COVID-19 vaccine authorized for use in Canada. The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is a Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine and is authorized for use in Canada for the COVID-19 virus. For the vaccine to work, it must be given in two doses, with the second dose given 28 days after the first single dose. The vaccine is approved for use on people 18 years and older. It does not contain a live virus.
- The Moderna vaccine can be stored in a regular freezer at -25° to -15° C or in a standard refrigerator (2° to 8° C) for up to 30 days before use.
- Health Canada has conducted rigorous scientific reviews of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to assess its safety. They will continue monitoring the vaccine closely in the short-and long-term after it is administered to ensure the safety and health of Canadians is protected. Learn about the [approval process for vaccines](#). The Public Health Agency of Canada has produced printable resources on [What You Need to Know About The COVID-19 Vaccine For Canada](#).

## Who should not receive the vaccine?

*At this time, the COVID-19 Moderna vaccine should not be administered to individuals who:*

- Are less than 18 years of age. Moderna is currently conducting additional studies in children from 12 years of age and older, and this indication could be revised in the future to include children if the data from these studies support it

## Why is the Pfizer vaccine not being distributed to rural or remote communities?

- Shipping and storage requirements of the Pfizer vaccine pose logistical challenges for distribution to the remote Northern regions of Canada. Given that the Moderna vaccine can be shipped and stored at a temperature of -20, it is considered to be a more suitable vaccine for distribution to remote areas.

## Facts about the Moderna Vaccine

- **The Moderna vaccine was tested on 30,000 thousand participants before Health Canada approved it for use in Canada.**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/healthcanada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines/treatments/vaccines/moderna.html#a3>
- **The Moderna vaccine was 94.1% effective in preventing COVID-19 beginning 2 weeks after the second dose. This means that people may not be fully protected against COVID-19 until at least 14 days after the second dose.**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/moderna.html#a3>
- **Anyone who has questions or concerns about vaccinations should talk to their community doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner or other healthcare provider. They can also visit [Canada.ca/vaccines](https://www.canada.ca/vaccines) to get evidence-based information.**

## What is the Moderna Vaccine made of?

**The Moderna vaccine ingredients are published here:**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/moderna.html#a11>

## What do I need to know about the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine?

- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is a Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine and was the first vaccine authorized for use in Canada for the COVID-19 virus. It is administered by injection into the muscle of the arm. For the vaccine to work fully, it must be given in two doses, with the second dose given 21 days after the first single dose. The vaccine is approved for use on people 16 years and older. It does not contain a live virus.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine needs to be stored at ultra-low temperatures (-80° to -60° C) and requires special handling with dry ice. It can be stored in a standard refrigerator (2° to 8° C) for up to 5 days before use.
- Health Canada has conducted a rigorous scientific review of the available medical evidence to assess the short-term safety of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. No major safety concerns have been identified in the data that we reviewed. As for all medicines, Health Canada will continue to [monitor the short- and long-term safety](#) of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in Canada closely. Along with the Public Health Agency of Canada and working in close collaboration with the provinces and territories and the manufacturer, we will monitor for any adverse events that may develop after immunization.

### Who should not receive the vaccine?

*At this time, the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine should not be administered to individuals who:*

- Are less than 16 years of age. Pfizer has just started clinical trials for youth.
- Have had an anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Have a known hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine
- The safety and efficacy of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in pregnant women and breastfeeding women has not yet been established. The COVID-19 vaccine may be offered to pregnant or breastfeeding women in the authorized age group if a risk assessment deems that the benefits outweigh the potential risks for the individual and the fetus/infant and if informed consent includes discussion about the absence of evidence on the use of the COVID-19 vaccine in this population.

## Facts about the Pfizer Vaccine

- **The Pfizer vaccine was tested on approximately 44,000 participants before Health Canada approved it for use in Canada.** <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/pfizer-biontech.html#a3>
- **The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine was 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 beginning 1 week after the second dose.** This means that people may not be fully protected against COVID-19 until at least 7 days after the second dose. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/pfizer-biontech.html#a3>
- **Anyone who has questions or concerns about vaccinations should talk to their community doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner or other healthcare provider. They can also visit [Canada.ca/vaccines](https://www.canada.ca/vaccines) to get evidence-based information.**

### What is the Pfizer Vaccine made of?

**The Pfizer vaccine ingredients are published here:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/pfizer-biontech.html#a1.1>