



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Provincial Health Services Authority

## COVID-19 Vaccine After Care Sheet (COVID-19 mRNA vaccine)

### What should I do right after receiving the vaccine?

- **Wait for at least 15 minutes** after receiving your vaccine. Longer waiting times of 30 minutes may be recommended if there is concern about a possible vaccine allergy. Though uncommon, fainting or allergic reactions can occur after vaccination. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy), swelling of your face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing. The clinic staff are prepared to manage these events should they occur.
- **Inform a health care provider** at the clinic if you feel unwell while waiting.
- While waiting, be sure to **leave your mask on** if at all possible and **remain at least 2 metres away** from anyone not part of your household.
- Use the **alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands** before leaving the clinic.
- **Do not operate a vehicle** or other form of transportation for at least 15 minutes after being vaccinated (as advised by the health care provider) or if you are feeling unwell.

### What should I expect in the next few days?

- Side effects can develop in the day or two after receiving the vaccine. Although these side effects are not serious to your health, they may make you feel unwell for a day or two; they will go away on their own.
  - The most common side effect is pain where the needle was given; swelling where the needle was given may also occur. A cool, damp cloth or wrapped ice pack where the vaccine was given may help.
  - Other symptoms may include tiredness, headache, fever, chills, muscle or joint soreness, nausea and vomiting. Some of these symptoms also happen with COVID-19. However, side effects from the vaccine should only last a day or two and go away on their own. You can continue working but use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as directed by your workplace. If your symptoms persist for longer than 3 days, or begin more than 1 week after vaccination, inform your supervisor if you are a health care worker or working in a setting where you should be checked for COVID-19 infection.
  - This vaccine is not a live virus vaccine, and cannot cause COVID-19 infection. Symptoms such as cough or other respiratory symptoms are not side effects of the vaccine and are more likely to be due to a respiratory infection like COVID-19. Should you develop such symptoms, you may need to be tested for COVID-19 infection. Contact your health care provider or call 8-1-1 for advice. Please check out the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en) at <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>.
  - You should be tested for COVID-19 if:

- You are a health care worker experiencing any of the symptoms listed above and work at a facility that is experiencing a COVID outbreak. Do not return to your workplace until you have tested negative or have been advised that you do not need to be tested.
- Your symptoms persist for longer than 3 days, or begin more than 1 week after vaccination.
- Your symptoms include respiratory symptoms (runny nose, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, etc). Do not return to work until you test negative.
  - Pain and fever after the vaccine mean that your immune system is working to build your immunity to COVID-19. If you are unable to carry on with your regular activities because of these symptoms, you can take medication such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Check with your health care provider if you need advice about medication.
- Serious side effects after receiving the vaccine are rare. However, **should you develop any serious symptoms or symptoms that could be an allergic reaction, call 9-1-1 right away.** Symptoms of an allergic reaction include hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy), swelling of your face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing.
- If you experience any serious side effects after vaccination, seek medical attention. Tell your health care provider that you received the COVID-19 vaccine and they will report this to your local public health department if they suspect this event was related to the vaccine.

### When should I return for my second dose of vaccine?

- **The immunization provider will let you know when to return for your second dose.** It is very important to receive the second dose for the vaccine to work well. Make an appointment or follow the instructions of the health care provider to ensure you receive the second dose at the right time.
- **Bring your immunization record with you for the second dose** and tell the person providing the second dose about any side effects you experienced after the first dose.

### Things to remember

- **Continue to follow the recommendations of local public health officials** to prevent spread of COVID-19, which include frequent handwashing, wearing a mask, and staying at least 2 metres from others.
- **Do not receive any other vaccines (except for your second COVID-19 vaccine)** until you have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and at least 28 days have passed after the second dose.
- **Keep your immunization record** in a safe place. You can also download the [CANImmunize](#) app to keep track of this and other vaccines.
- A digital record of your COVID-19 immunization will be available through an online portal called the [Health Gateway](#). Health Gateway is accessible from a personal computer, tablet or mobile phone using your [mobile BC Services Card](#). To register, visit [www.healthgateway.gov.bc.ca](http://www.healthgateway.gov.bc.ca).