



Make an informed choice about COVID-19 vaccines and take care of your mind, body, emotions, spirit and community.

BODY:

Understand how the vaccine helps your body to fight the virus and keep you feeling healthy.

**Simcoe-Muskoka-York Indigenous Health Circle
COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions
Body – Understand how vaccines help the body**



Can a COVID-19 Vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?

No. None of the vaccines contain a living virus that causes COVID-19. Instead, the vaccines only contain a tiny, harmless piece of the virus that helps your body recognize the virus and fight it if you ever came in contact with the real thing.

How does the COVID-19 Vaccine help me?

Anyone can become sick from the virus, even those who are very healthy. Even if you only experience mild COVID-19 illness, some people continue to have long-term complications that impact their ability to experience normal life, such as shortness of breath, fatigue, headaches, muscle/joint pain, cognitive impairment, cough and loss of taste and/or smell.

COVID-19 vaccines help your body's immune system to prepare to fight the virus if you are exposed to it. This means you are less likely to get sick if you are exposed. It also means if you do get COVID-19 your symptoms will be milder.

Do I still have to wear a mask and socially distance?

The COVID-19 vaccines are one important way of stopping the pandemic. Because it is still possible to become infected with and spread the virus even after you have the vaccine it is still important for you to continue to wear a mask, wash your hands, and follow physical distancing guidelines. These will all be important tools to stop the pandemic until enough people get the COVID-19 vaccine to stop the spread of the virus. Using all of these tools in combination is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones.



Will these vaccines alter my DNA?

No. mRNA vaccines cannot change your DNA or genetic makeup. mRNA is like a temporary photocopy of instructions for your body to make a harmless piece of the coronavirus so that you can build immunity. Soon after your body has used the mRNA instructions, your cells get rid of it.

Do the vaccines have side-effects for my body?

Similar to medications and other vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccines can cause side effects. The most common side effects include soreness at the injection site on your arm, a bit of tiredness, chills and/or a mild headache as the vaccine starts to work. Common side effects are usually mild and resolved within a few days after vaccination. These types of side effects are expected and simply indicate the vaccine is working to protect you by building your immunity.

As with any medicines and vaccines, allergic reactions are rare but can occur after receiving a vaccine. Most serious reactions will occur shortly after injection, and clinic staff are prepared to help you if you have an allergic reaction should it occur. This is why you are asked to wait at the clinic for 15 to 30 minutes after getting the vaccine.

Side effects are more likely to occur after your second dose of the vaccine. Since side effects are the result of your immune system building protection, once your immune system has been primed with the first dose then there is a much stronger immune response to the second dose (this is a good thing!).

Can I get the vaccines if I have allergies?

Depending on the allergies you have, you may be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine. You should not get the vaccine if you have ever had an allergic reaction to any of vaccine ingredients. A full list of ingredients can be found online on [Government of Canada website](#). If you have had severe allergic reactions and/or anaphylaxis to other vaccines, injectable medicines or allergens you can receive the vaccine but may need to stay longer to be observed by health care staff to ensure you are safe if you do have a reaction.

