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COVID-19
VACCINE INFO



Fact Check: Addressing False Information About COVID-19 Vaccines

False: COVID-19 vaccination is mandatory

While vaccinations against COVID-19 are strongly recommended to help protect our community, it is always your choice to be vaccinated. If you are unsure if this vaccination is right for you, you are encouraged to refer to credible resources to help inform your decision. Health Canada, Southwestern Public Health, primary care providers, and Public Health Ontario are all resources you can trust.

False: mRNA vaccines can alter your DNA

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use messenger RNA - or mRNA - to copy a COVID-19 protein so that your body can identify it and form an immune response. This process cannot change your DNA. The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of a cell (which is where your DNA is stored). Think of mRNA as an instruction manual for your body to build the tools it needs to fight COVID-19.

False: mRNA vaccines have dangerous ingredients

mRNA vaccines contain no preservatives. The ingredients are: the mRNA itself and a fatty coating layer to protect it; PEG (polyethylene glycol); salt; sugar; and water. Inform your primary care provider if you have an allergy to any of these ingredients.

False: Health Canada skipped steps to approve this vaccine

All vaccines in Canada are heavily regulated by Health Canada. As a result, it is illegal to sell or market a vaccine in Canada that has not completed all required stages of research or trials. Global funding for COVID-19 vaccine research gave countries the ability to review and compare trial data from around the world (which is usually a long process). The pandemic also meant there were large numbers of participants in clinical trials and lots of natural infection to review data against.

False: Most people will have a serious reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine

An allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) to a COVID-19 vaccine can occur, just like it can occur with any vaccine or medicine or food. Statistically this risk is low in individuals who do not have an allergy to the vaccine's ingredients. For context, if all 38 million Canadians were to be immunized for COVID-19, it would statistically result in only 76 to 95 people across Canada having an anaphylactic reaction. In comparison, a penicillin antibiotic given to 38 million Canadians would statistically result in 3,800 to 15,000 anaphylactic reactions. Health Canada publishes adverse vaccine events on its website, health-infobase.canada.ca.

False: This vaccine has long-term side effects

Since COVID-19 vaccines are new, the medical community is monitoring if there are any long-term side effects and, more importantly, how long immunity will last. What we do already know is there are lingering side effects of having a COVID-19 infection – even if the infection is mild. Common lingering side effects of COVID-19 infection include breathing problems from scar tissue in the lungs, ongoing muscle pain or headaches, organ damage to the heart and brain, blood clots, memory loss, and mood disorders. Clinics are already supporting individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 to help them manage these side effects. It is not yet known how long these side effects will last.