

# Protecting Yourself with COVID-19 Vaccines

What immunocompromised\* people should know.

## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which spreads easily from person to person through the air by breathing, talking, coughing or sneezing.<sup>1</sup>

A COVID-19 infection can cause severe illness, hospitalization, long-term negative health outcomes, and even death, especially in people with weakened immune systems.<sup>2</sup>

## What are the symptoms?

This virus causes a wide range of symptoms from mild (and sometimes no symptoms) to very severe. You may experience:<sup>3</sup>

- Cough
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Sore throat
- Trouble breathing
- Congestion
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

A COVID-19 infection can also cause a post-COVID-19 condition (called long COVID) where chronic symptoms can last for weeks, months or years after the infection clears. These symptoms can include:<sup>4</sup>

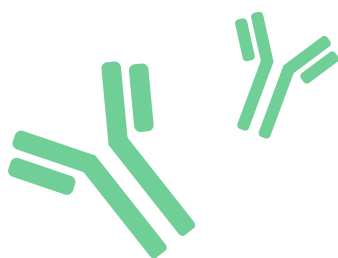
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Memory problems
- Body pain and weakness
- Anxiety and depression

## COVID-19 immunization is one of the best ways to prevent severe illness<sup>5,6</sup>

This vaccine is updated on a yearly basis to defend against the current strains of SARS-CoV-2.

Some immunocompromised people generate a weaker immune response to these vaccines compared to non-immunocompromised people, so it is recommended that immunocompromised people receive two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine each year to stay protected.<sup>6</sup>

Talk to your healthcare team for guidance on the COVID-19 vaccine based on your health condition.



It is important to recognize that SARS-CoV-2 continues to circulate and carries a significant burden of illness, particularly in immunocompromised adults.

COVID-19 is still a public health concern.

## How can I access the COVID-19 vaccine?

Each province has its own COVID-19 vaccine program. Find the most up-to-date information about your region's program, including where you can get the vaccine, below:

- [Alberta](#)\*
- [British Columbia](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [New Brunswick](#)
- [Newfoundland & Labrador](#)
- [Northwest Territories](#)
- [Nunavut](#)
- [Nova Scotia](#)
- [Ontario](#)
- [Prince Edward Island](#)
- [Quebec](#)\*
- [Yukon](#)

\*For the 2025-26 season, Alberta and Quebec have scaled back their publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine programs. They will provide free COVID-19 vaccinations to certain groups of immunocompromised people and older adults. If you live in a region where vaccines aren't publicly funded for you, ask your pharmacy or healthcare provider about patient-assistance programs or private coverage options.

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Canadian  
Immunocompromised  
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*What immunocompromised\* people should know...*

## Did you know?



Canada's current COVID-19 vaccines use mRNA technology, which has been well-studied and tested for many years.<sup>7</sup> They work by teaching your cells how to produce a small piece of the virus. This piece of the virus (known as a spike protein) helps your immune system learn to recognize and fight the virus.

Vaccines are an important tool and they work best when combined with other strategies like masking, ventilation, and staying home when sick.

Wear a high quality and well-fitting mask (e.g., N95 or equivalent) for added protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses!

## References

\*Immunocompromised is a term used to describe a weakened immune system that can be caused by a variety of medical conditions and drug treatments

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2. Public Health Agency of Canada. COVID-19: Who is at risk of more severe disease or outcomes [Internet]. Canada.ca. 2024. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/people-high-risk-for-severe-illness-covid-19.html>
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6. Public Health Agency of Canada. Summary: Guidance on the use of COVID-19 vaccines for 2025 to summer 2026 [Internet]. Canada.ca. 2025. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-summary-guidance-covid-19-vaccines-2025-summer-2026.html>
7. Health Canada. COVID-19 mRNA vaccines [Internet]. Canada.ca. 2022. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/type-mrna.html>

This resource was developed in January 2026 and reflects information available at that time.



This resource was developed in partnership with people who have lived experience.

[immunocompromised.ca](https://immunocompromised.ca)

