



Busting Myths on the COVID-19 Vaccine

The arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine represents a momentous turning point in our fight against COVID-19; however, uncertainty and misinformation around the topic are prevalent. Below, we bust some of the most common myths about COVID-19 vaccination.

MYTH: The vaccine was rushed and we can't be sure it's safe.

FACT: The vaccine has gone through the same rigorous process as all Health Canada drugs, only faster due to the severity of the pandemic. The vaccine has been tested in rigorous clinical trials and has proven safe and effective. It has been approved by the Government of Canada for use in people 16+ who do not meet certain exclusion criteria.

MYTH: The vaccine can give me COVID-19 and make me sick.

FACT: The vaccine is not a live virus, and it does not cause the illness that it is designed to prevent.

MYTH: Once I've gotten the vaccine, I will be fully immune to COVID-19.

FACT: The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is about 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 beginning seven days after the second dose, and the Moderna vaccine is about 94% effective starting two weeks after the second dose, as it takes time for your body to build immunity. Therefore, even after you reach optimal immunity, you still need to follow all safety measures to protect yourself and others against COVID-19, such as wearing appropriate PPE and practising physical distancing. No vaccine is 100% effective. For example, the flu vaccine is about 60-70% effective.

MYTH: The side effects of the vaccine are dangerous.

FACT: Serious side effects are extremely rare. Most people (approx. 90%) do not experience any side effects, and about 10% experience mild side effects (e.g. soreness at the site of injection) in the days following the shot. These side effects are expected and are not serious. They are more likely to occur after the second dose. Rarely, allergic reactions can occur. This is true of any vaccine.

MYTH: Since the COVID-19 vaccine uses mRNA technology, it can alter my DNA.

FACT: The pathway for RNA only works in one direction - you can make RNA from DNA, but you cannot make DNA from RNA. The RNA in this vaccine is a temporary messenger that tells your cells to recognize a "threat" and produce antibodies.

MYTH: If I've had COVID-19 before, I'm already immune and don't need to get vaccinated.

FACT: Even if you have previously recovered from COVID-19, you are encouraged to get immunized to optimize your immune protection.

MYTH: Getting the vaccine won't make a difference as I'll still need to follow all public health measures.

FACT: By getting the vaccine, you are helping to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community. Vaccines prevent illness and disease and save lives and livelihoods. Mass vaccination will save people's lives and help Canada recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. As more individuals are immunized, public health measures will likely start to be discontinued.