

Routine and Seasonal Immunization During COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Is it OK to get immunized during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes, you can get immunized during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's important that you continue to protect yourself from other diseases. Immunization is a very effective way to prevent certain diseases.

Public Health immunization programs are an essential service and remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Should I get the influenza vaccine during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes. It's important to protect yourself and others from Influenza. Influenza and COVID-19 are both respiratory infections. That means they affect your lungs and breathing. They can be very serious especially for seniors and people with chronic health conditions.

Because the symptoms of influenza may also be symptoms of COVID-19, getting immunized for influenza will lower the chance that you'll need to isolate and be tested for COVID-19. Get your influenza immunization early in the fall, usually October or November. It's important to protect yourself and others during influenza season which starts late fall and lasts through the winter.

If I think I have COVID-19, can I still get immunized?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 you should stay home and away from others (isolate). Use the COVID-19 Self-Assessment for Albertans (ahs.ca/testing) to book a COVID-19 test and get further instructions. You should **not** come for an immunization if you have symptoms, or if you're legally required to isolate. You can get immunized when you are feeling well again.

I had a vaccine and now I have COVID-19 like symptoms. What do I do?

After getting immunized some people can have side effects such as fever, headache, cough, runny nose, or sore throat. Side effects start within 24 hours after getting the vaccine. For vaccines that protect against Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Varicella, side effects can start 5 to 12 days after the immunization. Side effects tend to be mild and could last 24 to 48 hours.

The side effects to immunizations can be similar to symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms of COVID-19 can be:

- fever
- new or worsening chronic cough
- shortness of breath
- difficulty breathing
- runny nose
- sore throat

If you have side effects that are the same as [COVID-19 symptoms](#) you must stay home and away from others (isolate) even if you think they are from the vaccine. Children will have to stay home with a parent or guardian.

- If the side effects go away within 48 hours, you don't have to continue to isolate and you can return to normal activities. However, if you have been told to isolate for other reasons, then you must continue to isolate.
- If the side effects last longer than 48 hours, continue to stay home. Contact Health Link at **811** or complete the COVID-19 Self-Assessment for Albertans (ahs.ca/testing) to make an appointment for the COVID-19 test. If you don't get tested for COVID-19, you must stay at home for 10 days from the start of your symptoms or until you no longer have symptoms, whichever is longer.

Will immunization give me COVID-19 or put me at higher risk of getting it?

No. There is no evidence that getting an immunization can make you more or less likely to catch COVID-19. There is also no evidence that getting an immunization interferes with your body's ability to fight COVID-19 infection.

Will getting an immunization affect my COVID-19 test results?

No. Immunization will not change your COVID-19 test results.

Will someone come to my house to give me the influenza immunization if I may have COVID-19?

No. Please isolate and use the COVID-19 Self-Assessment for Albertans (ahs.ca/testing) to book a COVID-19 test and get further instructions. You can get the influenza vaccine when you're feeling well again.

What are pharmacies and public health clinics doing to protect people from COVID-19 during immunization visits?

All healthcare providers are required to have measures in place to protect you and themselves from COVID-19.

What's being done:

- screening clients and staff for illness and exposure to COVID-19
- setting up the clinic and using an appointment system to make sure that you can keep physical distance
- increased and thorough cleaning
- using personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks - some areas require you to wear a mask inside public places
- hand washing or using hand sanitizer when you arrive

If you have questions about your pharmacy or doctor's office infection control practices, you can call their Professional College. Professional Colleges provide oversight for professional practice.

- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta 780-423-4764
- Alberta College of Pharmacy 780-990-0321