

Information Sheet

COMIRNATY® Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine

Please read this information sheet carefully and ensure you ask a healthcare provider any questions you have before receiving the vaccine.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus, a type of virus. COVID-19 was first identified in late 2019 and declared a global pandemic in early 2020.

COVID-19 is usually spread by an infected person to others through coughing, sneezing, talking, singing or breathing. Someone with COVID-19 may not have any symptoms and not know they have COVID-19, but still be able to infect others.

For most people, symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses like the flu or common cold. A smaller number of people with COVID-19 can develop much more severe symptoms requiring hospitalization and it may result in long term health effects or even death.

Who should get the COMIRNATY® Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against COVID-19?

The COMIRNATY® Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is free and available to most Nunavummiut. It is up to you whether you decide to get the vaccine for yourself or your child. **It is important to know that you cannot get COVID-19 infection from the vaccine.**

The COMIRNATY® Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine causes our body to produce protection against infection from COVID-19. It is a type of vaccine that uses messenger RNA (mRNA) to help our body make protective antibodies against the virus.

Recent evidence has shown that vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 infection decreases over time. For most people with a healthy immune system, 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine eight weeks apart is sufficient as a primary series. For those who are immunocompromised, 3 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine four to eight weeks apart is sufficient as a primary series. If it has been at least 4.5 months since your last dose and you are over the age of 18 and at least 6 months since your last dose and you are between the ages of 12 and 17, you may be eligible for an additional dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, please do not come into the clinic and call the hotline (1-888-975-8601) to see if you need testing

COVID-19 vaccines are safe for people who have had, or think they might have had COVID-19. Please let a health care provider know if you had COVID within the last 3 months as this may affect the date you are eligible for your next dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Can children be vaccinated?

The COMIRNATY® Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is only authorized for use in people aged 5 years and older. Younger age groups are likely to have vaccines available soon.

You might not be vaccinated today if:

- You are allergic to one of the components of the vaccine.
- You had a serious allergic reaction to your first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and appropriate follow-up has not yet been completed.

If you are pregnant:

- You will have the opportunity to discuss vaccination with a nurse or doctor. **It is up to you whether or not you are vaccinated.**
- COMIRNATY® Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is safe and effective for pregnant people.

How safe is the COMIRNATY® Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine?

Canada has one of the most rigorous vaccine approval systems in the world. During vaccine development, studies provide information on the safety of a vaccine as well as how effective it is in developing immunity.

What are the side effects of the COMIRNATY® Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine?

The most common side effects that people get after the COMIRNATY® Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are minor and include:

- Pain, redness or swelling where the needle was given;



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- Fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain; nausea/vomiting, fever and chills.

All of these side effects usually disappear within 1-3 days without treatment. If they do not go away, call the health centre.

Very rare adverse events may occur such as an extreme allergic reaction or inflammation of the heart muscle or lining around the heart.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction include hives (bumps on the skin that are often very itchy), swelling of your face, tongue or throat, or difficulty breathing. The clinic staff are prepared to manage an allergic reaction should it occur and will provide immediate medical care if you develop any of these symptoms. Symptoms of myocarditis or pericarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle or lining around the heart) include chest pain, shortness of breath, and palpitations. Please contact the health centre if you experience any of these symptoms after COVID-19 vaccination.