

## **Answering Your Questions about the Vaccine**

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### **Question 1: Can I make my Personal Support Worker (PSW) show me proof that they got a vaccine?**

There is no legal requirement for PSWs to show clients proof of vaccination as it would be an invasion of privacy. At the moment, PSWs are able and encouraged to get vaccinated, but the Government does not mandate or require anybody in Canada to get a vaccine. Homecare agencies may have requirements for their employees to be vaccinated. You can talk to the homecare agency that provides your PSW support and ask if the company has a mandatory requirement for their employees to be vaccinated.

If you have any concerns that your PSW is not following COVID-19 protocols, contact their employer, which is the homecare agency. If you feel that the homecare agency is not cooperating with COVID-19 protocols, and/or if you need to modify your services, contact your Care Coordinator directly.

Another option is contacting the Long-Term Care Action Line, even if you are not a resident of a Long-Term Care home. In 2007, this line was expanded so that patients and caregivers could raise concerns or complaints about home and community care services. It is provided by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

If you contact the Long-Term Care Action Line, an Independent Complaints Facilitator (ICF) will be assigned to help you address your concern or complaint. The Long-Term Care Action Line may be contacted by telephone at 1-866-876-7658, or online at: [www.health.gov.on.ca](http://www.health.gov.on.ca).

For more information, visit: <https://healthcareathome.ca/central/en/Contact-Us/Feedback>.

### **Question 2: Can I say no to the vaccine and still get PSW support?**

Nobody in Canada is required to get a vaccine in order to get care.

At time of writing, there is no mention that being vaccinated is a condition to receive PSW support on the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) or the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) websites. You are welcome to contact the company that supplies your PSW support and ask to be sure.

### **Question 3: Can I get my flu shot too? Will it make me more achy?**

Yes, you can get immunized during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important that you keep protecting yourself from other diseases.

There is no evidence that getting an immunization makes you more likely to catch COVID-19. There is also no evidence that getting an immunization makes it harder for your body to fight COVID-19. Getting the flu shot while you are healthy can lower the chance that you will need to stay home, self-isolate, and be tested for COVID-19.

It is not recommended to get any two vaccines within less than 14 days apart. This includes the flu shot and a COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccines make your immune system produce more antibodies than usual. If you take two vaccines close to each other, your immune system will be working overtime. Also, in the event that you experience any side effects, you would not know which vaccine your body is reacting to.

After being vaccinated, it is common and normal to have temporary side effects like muscle aches. These usually last from a few hours to a few days after vaccination. You should not feel any pain in your arm from either injection for more than a few days, so getting both vaccines should not cause any more aches than usual.

To sum up, it is recommended that you get the flu shot and the COVID-19 vaccine, just don't get them within 14 days of each other.

Influenza and COVID-19 are both infections which affect your lungs and breathing, so some symptoms of influenza may also be symptoms of COVID-19. This PDF compares symptoms: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-flu-cold.pdf>.

If you have any of these symptoms and you think that you might have the flu, you should stay home and self-isolate for 14 days. Since some of the symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to the flu, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. You may need a COVID-19 test to help confirm if you have COVID-19. After you get tested for COVID-19, stay home and self-isolate for 14 days or until you get your COVID-19 test results. You can always call Telehealth Ontario if you have symptoms and want advice from a Registered Nurse. Their number is 1-866-797-0000. It's free and confidential.

Sources:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/flu-facts>.

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/Immunization-and-COVID-19-frequently-asked-questions.aspx>.

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If you think you may be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, take the self-assessment at [www.ontario.ca/coronavirus](http://www.ontario.ca/coronavirus). Follow all directions from your medical provider or your local health unit at the following phone numbers:

Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000

Toronto Public Health: 416-338-7600

Peel Public Health: 905-799-7700

Durham Region Health Department: 905-668-7711

York Region Public Health: 1-877-464-9675