

Answering Your Questions about COVID-19

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Question 1: Can I pick my booster? I had Pfizer and I want to stay with that but Rexall only has Moderna.

Yes, you can pick the brand of your booster shot. Certain locations, like the Rexall you mentioned, may have only one brand, but you are free to search for other vaccination sites that have the brand that you want, and you can book your appointment there.

That said, according to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), if you get the Pfizer booster shot (officially called the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty) or the Moderna booster shot (officially called the Moderna Spikevax), both of these brands “should be considered valid and therefore would not need to be repeated” ([page 6](#)). Click [here](#) to read NACI’s latest recommendations on booster COVID-19 vaccine doses in Canada. Remember that these recommendations may change in the future.

Source:

1. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-booster-covid-19-vaccine-doses/guidance-booster-covid-19-vaccine-doses.pdf>

Question 2: If I get the booster shot, does that mean I can still get covid but I won’t feel it?

According to the Government of Canada, “COVID-19 vaccines are all highly effective at preventing severe COVID-19 illness and death. However, vaccines are rarely 100% effective and you may still become infected with or without symptoms.”* So, you might still feel it, but your symptoms would be less severe than if you did not have a booster shot.

Symptoms of COVID-19 vary from person to person based on their age and unique health conditions.* Click [here](#) to learn more about the different symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you think you might be experiencing one or more of them.

Sources:

1. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html#s>

2. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/people-high-risk-for-severe-illness-covid-19.html>

Question 3: Do PSWs have to get the booster?

No, they are not legally required to get the booster shot. A recent Ministry of Long-Term Care directive states that PSWs are required to have a minimum of two doses of a vaccine that is authorized by Health Canada, or three doses of a vaccine that is not authorized by Health Canada (for instance, if they were vaccinated in another country).*

On December 3, NACI made a strong recommendation for “adults who are frontline healthcare workers (having direct close physical contact with patients)” to get “a booster dose of an authorized mRNA COVID-19 vaccine” more than six months after the day that they received their second dose.*

Sources:

1. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministers-directive-long-term-care-home-covid-19-immunization-policy>
2. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-booster-covid-19-vaccine-doses.html>

Question 4: Is the Omicron variant worse than the Delta variant?

According to Public Health Ontario (PHO), preliminary data and modelling data “suggest that Omicron may be more transmissible than the Delta variant” ([page 3](#)). While the Omicron variant may spread more easily, current data shows that most people with Omicron “were either asymptomatic at the time of testing or reported only mild symptoms” ([page 4](#)). PHO acknowledges that this new variant still needs more research([page 4](#)).

Source:

1. https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/voc/2021/12/covid-19-omicron-b11529-risk-assessment-dec-7.pdf?sc_lang=en

Question 5: If I had covid one, can I get Omicron now?

Yes, you can still be infected with any of its variants. Each variant is a different disease, so you do not have immunity from them even if you have had COVID-19 before.

Question 6: How can I get my health card renewed? I don't want to go get my picture taken.

You can renew your health card online. Click [here](#) to learn more about the process and click [here](#) to wait in line to speak with a Service Ontario representative.

Sources:

1. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/health-card-renewal>
2. https://www.services.gov.on.ca/wps85/poc/s2i?uri=s2i:s2iLanding_ohcdlr&lang=en

Question 7: Can consumers get rapid tests for our home? I don't want to get in a line with people that have covid.

Check with your local public health unit to see what options are available in your area. Click [here](#) to find your public health unit and learn how to contact them.

Question 8: Are we going into a hard lockdown? I think we should.

On December 15, a reporter asked Premier Doug Ford if the provincial government is considering any more province-wide restrictions, including a lockdown. Ford responded that, “Everything is on the table”, but he also said that, “Locking ourselves down out of this isn’t the solution. What the solution is is making sure everyone goes out and gets a booster shot in every corner of this province.” You can find this quote in [this video](#) from 26:12 to 26:37.

Based on this statement, I think that Ford is not planning on another lockdown right now, but there is a chance that it could happen in the future.

Sources:

1. <https://news.ontario.ca/en/advisory/1001349/updated-premier-ford-to-provide-an-update>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m18D4eeRDRk>

Question 9: I am sad and miss my sister.

I’m sorry to hear you’re feeling this way! It’s completely normal to feel sad at this time of year, especially since variants keep preventing us from seeing our loved ones as usual. I’m not sure why you and your sister are unable to visit each other, but I wonder if you can still do some of the activities that you used to do together, either over the phone or video call, or by yourself. For example, were there any songs or bands that you used to listen to together?

It’s tough to acknowledge our difficult feelings, so it’s admirable that you have the courage to reach out. Sometimes we can’t feel happier until we explore these negative feelings with a mental health professional. These questions might be helpful to think about and discuss:

Can you think of another difficult time in the past or recently when you were proud of how you handled the situation? What things did you say to yourself and what things did you do to feel better? What is one small change that you could do this week that would help you feel better?

[ConnexOntario](#) can provide information about and help you get connected to counselling services and support services in your community.

Source:

1. <https://www.connexontario.ca/en-ca/>

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If you think you may be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, take the self-assessment at 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