

# What You Need to Know about Getting Vaccinated in Pharmacies

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Across the province, many pharmacies are administering COVID-19 vaccines. Here are some commonly asked questions. All of these answers are from [this Ontario Ministry of Health document](#). This article is a general overview, so some parts of the original document are not included. If you have other questions, click [here](#) to see if they are in the original document.

## 1. Who can get a COVID-19 vaccine at a pharmacy?

Eligibility criteria changes based on how available COVID-19 vaccines are. If you live, work or study in Ontario, or if you are here for an extended stay, you may be eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at a participating pharmacy.

Check [the Ministry of Health website](#) and look for the most recent Executive Officer Notice about eligibility. Click [here](#) to read the most recent document about who is eligible for first and second doses as well as booster doses.

## 2. Is this happening at all pharmacies? Where should I go?

Many, but not all, pharmacies are participating. To locate the closest one near you, click [here](#).

## 3. Which COVID-19 vaccines are available at pharmacies?

Pharmacies will be providing the COVID-19 vaccines that are available according to the provincial vaccine rollout plan. There is no guarantee that the pharmacy you visit will have the brand of vaccine (e.g. Pfizer, Moderna) that you want.

In general, pharmacies are administering COVID-19 mRNA vaccines, namely, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (both for people who are 12 years old and older and for children ages 5 to 11) and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine (for ages 6+).

There are fewer doses of the Nuvaxovid™ COVID-19 vaccine by Novavax, Inc. and viral vector COVID-19 vaccines such as AstraZeneca or Janssen COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson). These vaccines are managed by local public health units. These vaccines will only be offered to those who decline an mRNA vaccine or have contraindications to mRNA vaccines. “Contraindications” are any conditions that could put your health at risk during vaccination. If you want these vaccines, they will explain the risks to you so that you can give informed consent.

#### **4. Are pharmacists trained to administer vaccines?**

Yes! There are specific quality standards in place so it is safe to get vaccinated at a pharmacy. Whether you are vaccinated by a pharmacist, a registered pharmacy student, an intern, or a pharmacy technician, they will have received the appropriate injection training.

#### **5. I am immunocompromised. Can I get a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at a pharmacy?**

Yes, you can!

You need to give the pharmacy a copy of a referral letter from your healthcare provider. Another option is to show them a recent prescription label or prescription receipt, or the pharmacy can refer to your medication profile, and cross-reference the medication shown on those documents with the list of immunosuppressive medications that qualifies people to receive a third dose.

If your prescription isn't on this list (click [here](#) to view), you may be told to come back with a referral form/letter for a third dose from your healthcare provider.

#### **6. What happens before and after the vaccine is administered by the pharmacy?**

Before getting the vaccine, the pharmacist will explain the process and give you the chance to ask them any questions. You will be required to give your consent either by yourself or through a substitute decision-maker.

Pharmacy staff will provide you with written vaccine information, after-care instructions, and a written receipt (Don't worry, you don't have to pay for the vaccine!).

Your receipt will have: the contact information of the pharmacy where you received the vaccine, a scheduled time and date for your second dose (if applicable), and instructions for your second dose (if applicable). The pharmacy may provide an electronic receipt with this information.

It's very important that you keep your receipt for your vaccination in a safe place and bring it to your appointment for the next dose, whether it's your second dose or your booster(s)!

You will be asked to wait for 15 minutes after receiving your vaccine to make sure that you are feeling well. They may recommend that you wait for more than 30 minutes if there is a concern about a possible vaccine allergy or an adverse event following injection. If you did not have any adverse effects after your other doses, you may not need to wait as long.

#### **7. Where can I get more information?**

More information is available in the original document, which you can read if you click [here](#). For more information related to COVID-19 and being vaccinated, talk to your health care provider. You can also visit these web pages:

**Learn more about COVID-19 vaccine safety:**

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccine-safety>

**Learn more COVID-19 vaccines:**

[www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-andconditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/vaccines](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-andconditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/vaccines)

**Ontario COVID-19 Resources:**

[www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectiousdiseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/public-resources](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectiousdiseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/public-resources)

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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