

## Should I get or not get the latest COVID-19 vaccine?



### 1. This decision aid is for people:

- 65 years or older;
- thinking about getting the latest COVID-19 vaccine (the booster);
- who got a COVID-19 vaccine 3 to 6 months ago, OR had, OR think they had a COVID-19 infection.<sup>[1]</sup>

### 2. What are facts people may not be aware of?

- The latest COVID-19 vaccine protects people against the current strain of the virus and may help their immune systems be ready to respond to new strains.<sup>[1,2]</sup>
- After getting the vaccine, some people have symptoms (e.g. fatigue, headaches, chills), which means their immune system is responding and will be better able to protect them if exposed to the COVID-19 virus.
- People are less protected over time. Protection from past vaccines and natural immunity from having COVID-19 infection wears off over time.<sup>[2]</sup>
- The protective effect on family, friends, and the community increased as more people were immunized.<sup>[3]</sup>
- The latest COVID-19 vaccine is available free of charge in Canada.<sup>[2]</sup>

### 3. What are the pros and cons of getting or not getting the vaccine?

Data is based on research findings from people aged 50 years and older. Some data is from previous Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines	What happened to people who had the latest COVID-19 vaccine? (Pfizer; Moderna)	What happened to people who did not have the latest COVID-19 vaccine?
<b>Pros of having the latest COVID-19 vaccine</b>		
Fewer people had a COVID-19 infection (for 6 months after the vaccine) <sup>[4,5]</sup>	5 out of 100 people had a COVID-19 infection	9 out of 100 people had a COVID-19 infection
Fewer people had severe illness from a COVID-19 infection (for 6 months after the vaccine) <sup>[5,6]</sup>	8 out of 100 people had a severe illness from a COVID-19 infection	25 out of 100 people had severe illness from a COVID-19 infection
Fewer people stayed in hospital due to COVID-19 infection (for 6 months after the vaccine) <sup>[5,7]</sup>	7 out of 100 people had hospital stays	33 out of 100 people had hospital stays
Fewer people had long-COVID symptoms after having a COVID-19 infection <sup>[8,9]</sup>	6 out of 100 people had long-COVID symptoms after having a COVID-19 infection	17 out of 100 people had long-COVID symptoms after having a COVID-19 infection
<b>Cons of having the latest COVID-19 vaccine</b>		
People had injection site reactions: sore, red, swelling (for up to 1 day after the COVID-19 vaccine) <sup>[10]</sup>	62 out of 100 people had injection site reactions	This does not apply because there was no injection.
People had symptoms: headache, fatigue, chills, joint pain, fever, diarrhea, muscle aches (for up to 1 week after the COVID-19 vaccine) <sup>[10]</sup>	52 out of 100 people had symptoms	This does not apply because there was no vaccine given.
Feeling unable to do usual daily or leisure activities (for up to 1 week after the COVID-19 vaccine) <sup>[10]</sup>	17 out of 100 people had limited activities after having the vaccine	This does not apply because there was no vaccine given.
Very few people had rare reactions after the COVID-19 vaccine <sup>[11,12]</sup>	Less than 2 out of 10,000 people had inflammation of the heart. 8 out of 1,000,000 people had Guillain-Barré syndrome after getting the COVID-19 vaccine	This does not apply because there was no vaccine given.

#### 4. What matters most to you?

Circle how much each reason matters **to you** on a scale from 0 to 5.

'0' means it is **not** important to you. '5' means it is **very** important to you.

Reasons to get the latest COVID-19 vaccine	Not Important			Very important		
I want to do whatever I can to protect myself against the current COVID-19 infection.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I want to reduce my chances of getting a severe illness or hospital stay due to COVID-19 infection.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I want to reduce my chances of getting long-COVID.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I want to protect my family, friends, and/or community against the current COVID-19 infection.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Other: (please specify)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Reasons not to get the latest COVID-19 vaccine	Not Important			Very important		
I do not want to have the injection site reaction and more common reactions.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I do not want to have a very rare reaction.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I do not want to disrupt my usual activities due to potential reactions to the latest vaccine for up to 1 week.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I do not want to get a needle.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Other: (please specify)	0	1	2	3	4	5

#### 5. Which option do you prefer?

- I plan to get the latest COVID-19 vaccine.
- I do not plan to get the latest COVID-19 vaccine.
- I plan to discuss the options with \_\_\_\_\_ (pharmacist, doctor, public health, family).
- Other, please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

#### This information is not intended to replace the advice of a health care provider.

Last reviewed: 2024-03-25. Readability: 7.1 Flesch Kincaid; Funding: None; Content editors: Q Zhang, D Stacey, KB Lewis, JC Phillips, J Presseau, M Smith, S McCreedy. Authors have no actual or potential conflicts to disclose. Format based on: Ottawa Personal Decision Guide © 2015, A O'Connor, D Stacey, University of Ottawa, Canada.

**References** [1]. **National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI)**, Guidance on an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccines in the spring for individuals at high risk of severe illness due to COVID-19. January 12, 2024; [2]. **Public Health Agency of Canada**, COVID-19 vaccines. January 12, 2024; [3]. Vaccinate Your Family, **Vaccines Protect Communities**. January 12, 2024; [4]. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness. Sep 29, 2023; [5]. **Public Health Agency of Canada**, COVID-19 epidemiology. Nov 08, 2023; [6]. Macartney K. Why older adults can continue to **benefit from COVID-19 boosters**. BMJ 2023; [7] Carazo S, et al. **Effectiveness of previous infection-induced and vaccine-induced** protection against hospitalization due to omicron BA subvariants in older adults: a test-negative, case-control study in Quebec, Canada. Lancet 2023; [8]. Català, M., et al. The effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines **to prevent long COVID symptoms**: staggered cohort study of data from the UK, Spain, and Estonia. The Lancet Respiratory Medicine, 2024; [9]. **Public Health Agency of Canada**, COVID-19: Longer-term symptoms among Canadian adults. Mar 24, 2023; [10]. Hause AM, et al. **Safety monitoring of COVID-19 mRNA vaccine second booster doses** among adults aged ≥50 years - United States, Mar 29, 2022–July 10, 2022. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep, 2022; [11]Hoffman, Y, et al. Severe **COVID-19 Vaccine Side Effects are Rare in Older Adults** yet are Linked With Depressive Symptoms. Am J Geriatr Psychiatry, Jan 2022. [12] Ogunjimi, OB, et al. **Guillain-Barré Syndrome Induced by Vaccination Against COVID-19: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis**. Cureus, 2023.