

## Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I have an underlying health condition(s)?

- If you have an underlying health condition, including high blood pressure; diabetes (type I or II); cerebrovascular disease; chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD); heart disease; cancer; kidney diseases, or liver diseases, you are more likely to experience serious symptoms if you get infected with COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>
- **The general recommendation is for you to get a COVID-19 vaccine to protect you from getting sick and developing serious illness from COVID-19 infection.**
- It is also safe for you to get a COVID-19 vaccine if you have one or more of the following health conditions<sup>2</sup>:
  - Rheumatologic diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), psoriatic arthritis, vasculitis or spondylarthritis
  - Allergies (to allergens other than those ingredients contained in the vaccines)
  - Cancer
  - Diabetes (type I or II) and other endocrine disorders
  - Cardiac conditions (e.g. coronary artery disease/myocardial infarction, heart failure, cardiomyopathy)
  - Respiratory diseases (e.g. COPD, emphysema and chronic bronchitis, pulmonary hypertension)
  - Previous medical surgeries (e.g. heart bypass surgeries)
  - Chronic kidney disease (requiring dialysis)
  - Renal transplant
  - HIV (undetectable viral load; risk is less clear for active HIV infection with detectable viral load)
  - Clotting disorders (suggestion is to apply pressure to the vaccine injection site for 3-5 minutes after injection to reduce bruising)
  - Neuroimmunological disorders (e.g. multiple sclerosis)
  - Fibromyalgia
  - Autoimmune diseases (e.g. inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis)
  - Sickle-cell anemia
  - Mast cell disorders (a pre-treatment protocol is recommended before the vaccine is given and it is recommended that you talk to your hematologist or immunologist for further information).

**Can I get the vaccine if I have a weakened immune system?**

- You may still receive the vaccine, but you should talk to your doctor first.<sup>3</sup>
- The research studies have included some people who were immunocompromised or with underlying health conditions, but we do not have enough safety data on these groups to make strong recommendations.<sup>4-6</sup>
- If you have a weakened immune system, you may not receive as much protection from the vaccine as people with healthy immune systems. However, you will likely still get enough protection from the vaccine.

**If you have an inherited bleeding disorder, you may still receive COVID-19 vaccine<sup>2</sup>:**

- Please let the person giving you the vaccination know that you have a bleeding disorder prior to the injection.
- They may use a smaller gauge needle, if possible; apply 10 minutes of pressure after the injection.
- If you are on prophylaxis with factor concentrate, you should time your prophylaxis with the day of your vaccine injection.
- If you treat on-demand but have a history of severe bleeding, you may need a treatment with factor concentrate before the vaccine injection. Please contact your bleeding disorder team.



Taking the COVID-19 vaccine is a personal choice. If you are concerned about taking the vaccine due to any underlying health conditions or medications that you are currently taking, **talk with your health care provider before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.**

You may also reach out to the **Toronto Public Health Hotline** or **Health Canada COVID-19 Information Line** for additional information at:

**Toronto Public Health Hotline:**  
**Telephone:** 416-338-7600  
**TTY:** 416-392-0658  
**Email:** [PublicHealth@toronto.ca](mailto:PublicHealth@toronto.ca)

Translation is available in multiple languages.

**Health Canada COVID-19 Information Line:**  
**Telephone:** 1-833-784-4397  
**Email:** [phac.covid19.aspc@canada.ca](mailto:phac.covid19.aspc@canada.ca)



# References

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5. Baden LR, El Sahly HM, Essink B, et al. Efficacy and Safety of the mRNA-1273 SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine. *N Engl J Med.* 2020;0(0):null. doi:10.1056/NEJMoa2035389
6. Public Health Agency of Canada. Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines. aem. Published July 22, 2020. Accessed August 9, 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html#b2>