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# Vaccination for adults

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Vaccines aren't just for babies and children. Learn why vaccination is important for adults too.

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## COVID-19 vaccination

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to protect us against COVID-19. Vaccines will be available at no charge over the course of 2021 to everyone in Canada.

Vaccination will begin with groups who are at risk of:

- exposure to COVID-19
- severe illness and death from COVID-19

Everyone else will be able to get vaccinated once these groups have received their vaccine.

## What you should know about vaccines for COVID-19

# Why vaccination is important for adults

Vaccination isn't just for children. Vaccines are safe and protect you and those around you from vaccine-preventable diseases.

As we get older, the protection we had from previous vaccination can decrease for some diseases. Getting another dose (called a booster) can increase our immunity to provide the best protection. Some adults may have missed one or more of their vaccines. They may need to catch up and get these vaccines now.

There are also diseases that are more common in adults, even healthy adults. This is why additional vaccines are needed as we get older.

By keeping up to date with vaccines, adults can prevent the spread of disease to those who may be more likely to get sick from them. These include:

- babies
- young children
- people who are pregnant
- people with certain medical conditions, such as those who have weakened immunity

This is known as community immunity or herd immunity.

Check if your vaccines are up to date. Talk to your health care provider to see what you need to be fully protected.

Learn more about:

- [Vaccine safety and possible side effects](#)
- [Vaccination coverage in Canada](#)

# Vaccines for adults

Adults should discuss the type and number of vaccines they need with a health care provider. Your health care provider may ask questions about your medical history, including:

- what vaccines you had in the past
- if you're pregnant or planning to become pregnant
- if you have health conditions
- your type of work
- if you have upcoming travel

Adults may need a vaccine for the following vaccine-preventable diseases:

- chicken pox (varicella)
- diphtheria
- hepatitis A
- hepatitis B
- HPV (human papillomavirus)
- measles
- meningococcal
- mumps
- pneumococcal
- polio
- rubella
- shingles
- tetanus
- whooping cough (pertussis)

## Vaccines for people who could become pregnant

Vaccination is important for everyone of reproductive age, whether planning a pregnancy or not.

During pregnancy, your immune system changes and this can put you at risk for a number of serious infectious diseases and complications. Your baby can also be affected by these infections, which can result in:

- birth defects
- premature birth
- miscarriage (losing a baby before birth)
- death

Since an unplanned pregnancy can happen, it's important to keep your vaccinations up to date at all times. This will help protect you and your baby from certain infections that could cause serious complications. Talk to your health care provider about your vaccination status.

[Learn more about vaccination and pregnancy.](#)

## Vaccines for adults 60 years of age and older

Some vaccine preventable disease are more common with age, as our immune system may not respond as well as we get older. This puts us at a greater risk for certain diseases, including:

- flu
- shingles
- pneumococcal disease

The flu is more likely to cause severe illness and even death in older adults.

It's also important to make sure routine vaccines are up to date for diseases such as:

- diphtheria

- tetanus
- whooping cough (pertussis)

## Vaccines for adult travellers

Travelling to other countries can increase your risk for certain diseases. Discuss your travel plans with your health care provider or a travel clinic as far ahead of departure as possible.

Vaccination may prevent diseases that are common in other parts of the world. These include:

- cholera
- hepatitis A
- hepatitis B
- Japanese encephalitis
- meningococcal
- rabies
- typhoid
- yellow fever

[Learn more about travel vaccinations.](#)

## Vaccine schedule for adults

It's recommended that adults get vaccinated for common diseases at certain stages of their life.

### Recommended vaccines for all healthy adults

► **Diphtheria and tetanus**

▶ **Shingles**

▶ **Flu**

▶ **Whooping cough (pertussis)**

▶ **Pneumococcal**

## Other vaccines you may need

▶ **Hepatitis A**

▶ **Hepatitis B**

▶ **HPV (human papillomavirus)**

▶ **Measles, mumps and rubella**

▶ **Meningococcal**

▶ **Chicken pox (varicella)**

▶ **Travel vaccines**

You may need more or fewer vaccines depending on your medical history and risks. Talk to your health care provider about the right vaccines for you.

Provinces and territories have differences in how vaccines are provided and which vaccines are publicly funded.

## Related links

- [Not Just for Kids: An Adult Guide to Vaccination](#)
- [Travelling abroad](#)
- [Provincial and territorial immunization information](#)

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