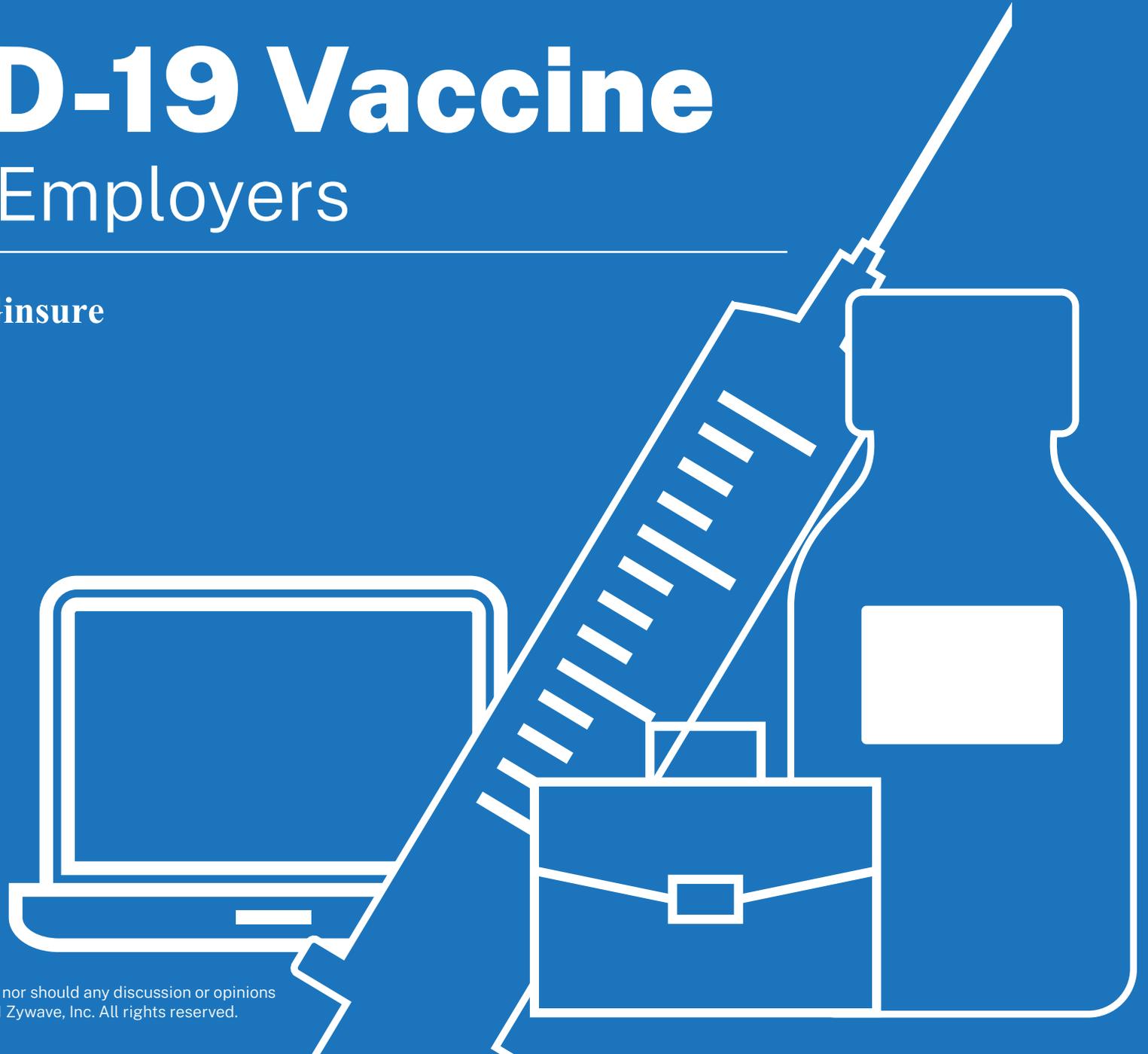


# COVID-19 Vaccine

## FAQs for Employers

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Presented by **KRGinsure**



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# Introduction

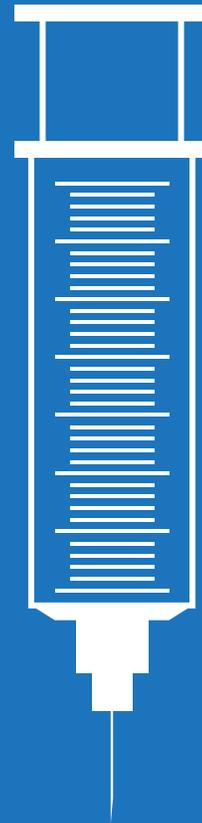
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The COVID-19 pandemic has been wreaking havoc in Canada for over a year at this point. Now, vaccines are finally here. There is a lot of information on the internet regarding the vaccines, some of which is misleading. It's important for employers to learn the facts about the COVID-19 vaccines so they can better protect their employees and customers.

This provides an overview of the COVID-19 vaccines and answers some common questions relevant to employers. Information comes primarily from Health Canada and may be updated over time.

## Are There Multiple Vaccines?

There are four vaccines that have been authorized by Health Canada at the time of this writing: the Moderna vaccine, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the AstraZeneca vaccine and the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine. The vaccines differ in some ways (namely, how they must be shipped and stored), but they are fundamentally the same.



The approved COVID-19 vaccines in Canada are free. They're available to priority populations first, and then are recommended for individuals

**age 18 and older for the Moderna and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine, and individuals age 16 and older for both the Pfizer-BioNTech and AstraZeneca vaccines.**



## Are the Vaccines Worth Getting?

The vaccines have gone through rigorous vetting procedures and clinical trials, attesting to their safety and effectiveness. The vaccines not only protect the individual, but also anyone they might come into contact with. This can dramatically help curb the spread of COVID-19.

## Are There Side Effects?

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**Like most other vaccines, these may come with mild side effects, including:**

- *Pain, redness or swelling near where the shot was administered*
- *Fatigue*
- *Joint pain*
- *Chills*
- *Headache*
- *Fever*

**Employees experiencing these or other symptoms for more than three days should contact their primary care physician.**

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## How Will They Be Administered?

The Moderna, Pfizer-BioNtech and AstraZeneca vaccine must be administered in two doses —

one initial shot and another three to four weeks later. Getting both shots will provide the most protection, though a single dose should offer some protective benefits, according to experts. The Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine is administered in one dose.

## Who Should Receive the Vaccines?

Individuals age 16 and up can receive a vaccine (depending on which one). However, there are some caveats to this, particularly if the individual has certain health conditions. While experts are encouraging as many people as possible to get vaccinated, anyone considering getting the vaccines should first consult their doctor.

## Who Should Not Receive the Vaccines?

There has yet to be a vaccine produced for children under the age of 16, although one is expected eventually. Beyond young children, other people that should not receive vaccines include:

- Anyone with severe allergies to any ingredients contained within the vaccines
- Anyone who experienced an allergic reaction — severe or not — after receiving their first dose of the vaccines
- Anyone with underlying medical conditions that may not respond well to the vaccines



Employees should talk to their doctors to learn whether the vaccines are safe for them to receive.

### **Do Employees Need the Vaccines if They Recovered From COVID-19 Already?**

If someone previously contracted and recovered from COVID-19, they should still receive a vaccine if they can, according to Canada's COVID-19 vaccine task force.

### **When Will the Vaccines Be Available?**

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) provides advice to the Public Health Agency of Canada and chooses groups for early vaccination based on risk factors. The early vaccination rollout began in December 2020 and consists of three stages:

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#### **Stage 1**

- Those who are at a higher risk of severe outcomes of COVID-19
- Those most likely to transmit to those at a higher risk for severe illness or death

#### **Stage 2**

- Adults in or from Indigenous communities not included in stage 1
- Residents and staff of all other shared living settings

- Adults 60 to 69 years of age
- Adults in radicalized and marginalized communities
- First responders
- Frontline essential workers who can't work virtually and have direct physical contact with the public
- Essential primary caregivers

#### **Stage 3**

- People 16 to 59 years of age with an underlying medical condition who are at high risk of severe illness due to COVID-19
- Adults 50 to 59 years of age without an underlying medical condition
- Non-frontline health care workers who are needed to maintain health care capacity but don't have direct close physical contact with the public
- Non-frontline essential workers who don't have direct close physical contact with the public

NACI predicts the vaccine rollout will be completed by September of 2021.



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**Can the Vaccines Be Mandatory for Employees?**

*In short, yes — under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, employers have a duty to protect their workers, meaning employers may generally make receiving a vaccine a mandatory condition of employment. But that may not always be the best option for every organization. As such, employers should seek legal counsel to discuss which course of action is best for their specific circumstances.*

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**Can COVID-19 Precautions End if All Employees Are Vaccinated?**

The vaccines are only one of several tools in the arsenal used to fight COVID-19. So even after receiving both doses of vaccines, other workplace safeguards should remain in effect, including:

- Washing hands frequently
- Wearing masks
- Social distancing
- Self-quarantining if sick

There is still much unknown about the vaccines. Maintaining these precautions will help ensure a higher level of safety for employees, their families and the community at large.

Visit Canada's [public health website](#) for more answers to COVID-19-related questions. Reach out for additional workplace guidance on this and other topics relevant to your organization.

