COVID-19 VACCINE

MYTHS AND FACTS

The arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines represents a momentous turning point in our fight against COVID-19; however, uncertainty and misinformation around the topic are prevalent. Below, we bust some of the most common myths about COVID-19 vaccination.

MYTH
The vaccines were rushed and we can't be sure they are safe.

FACT
The vaccines have gone through the same rigorous process as all Health Canada drugs/vaccines, only faster due to the severity of the pandemic. The vaccines have been tested in rigorous clinical trials and have been proven safe and effective. They have been approved by the Government of Canada for use in people 16+ who do not meet certain exclusion criteria.

MYTH
The vaccines can give me COVID-19 and make me sick.

FACT
None of the approved vaccines contain live virus, so cannot cause the illness that they are designed to prevent.

MYTH
The side effects of the vaccines are dangerous.

FACT
Serious side effects are extremely rare. Most people (approx. 90%) do not experience any side effects, and about 10% experience mild side effects (e.g. soreness at the site of injection) in the days following the shot. These side effects are expected and are not serious. They are more likely to occur after the second dose. Very rarely, allergic reactions can occur. This is true of any vaccine.

MYTH
Since some of the COVID-19 vaccines use mRNA technology, they can alter my DNA.

FACT
The pathway for RNA only works in one direction – you can make RNA from DNA, but you cannot make DNA from RNA. The RNA in this vaccine is a temporary messenger that tells your cells to recognize a "threat" and produce antibodies.

MYTH
If I've had COVID-19 before, I'm already immune and don't need to get vaccinated.

FACT
Even if you have recovered from COVID-19, there is still a chance of reinfection. You are encouraged to get immunized to optimize your immune protection.

MYTH
Getting the vaccine won't make a difference as I'll still need to follow all public health measures.

FACT
By getting the vaccine, you are helping to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community. Vaccines prevent illness and disease and save lives and livelihoods.

MYTH
After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, I will test positive for COVID-19 on a viral test.

FACT
None of the approved COVID-19 vaccines can cause you to test positive on viral tests. If your body develops an immune response – the goal of vaccination – there is a possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. Antibody tests indicate you had a previous infection and that you may have some level of protection against the virus.

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Mass vaccination will save people's lives and help Canada recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. As more individuals are immunized, public health measures will likely start to be discontinued.

For detailed information on the vaccine, please visit the Ministry of Health's website at https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccines-ontario.

If you have concerns, we encourage you to speak to your doctor.

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Adapted from materials developed by Baycrest