

Planning for your COVID-19 vaccine

Information for people who have had an organ transplant

November 23, 2022

Why is planning for a COVID-19 vaccine important?

- Some people who have had an organ transplant will want to contact their transplant care team if they have questions or if they take certain medications.
- It is very important that you monitor how you are feeling in the days leading up to your vaccine appointment. If you do not feel well, rebook for when you are feeling better.

Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine? Will the vaccine work for me?

- All of the COVID-19 vaccines available in Canada are safe. Vaccines teach your body to develop antibodies against the COVID-19 virus. These antibodies will help fight off future infections and protect from serious illness.
- Doctors and researchers have looked at the evidence. These experts agree that, unless you have a **very** serious allergy to any of the vaccine ingredients, you should strongly consider getting a COVID-19 vaccine. This is because people who have had an organ transplant have a higher chance of experiencing severe symptoms if you get COVID-19.
- People who have had an organ transplant weren't included in the clinical trials of the COVID-19 vaccines. However, the way the vaccines work means that there is a strong chance that your immune system will learn to protect you, to some degree, from COVID-19.

What if I just received an organ transplant?

- If you very recently received an organ transplant (within the last month), your transplant care team will get in touch with you and let you know when it is safe for you to be vaccinated. You can also reach out to your transplant care team. Please do not book your vaccine until you have consulted with them.

What if I am waiting for an organ transplant?

- If you are on the wait list for a transplant, you are encouraged to get your COVID-19 vaccination.

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What if I test positive for COVID-19?

- If you've recently had a positive COVID-19 test result, you can wait up to 3 months for a booster dose. The likelihood of a COVID-19 reinfection during this period of time is small because having COVID-19 boosts your immunity.
- You can also choose to get a booster dose at any time after your symptoms have passed. It is not harmful to get vaccinated and it will give you a good boost to your protection.

What about the medications or treatments that I take?

- If you have recently been taking rituximab, or if you have recently been treated for acute organ rejection, please contact your transplant care team before you book your vaccine. They will help you plan the best timing for vaccination based on your treatment.
- You should continue to take your anti-rejection medications regularly as prescribed. Please do not change the way you take any of your medications without contacting your transplant care team.
- Contact your transplant care team if you have any questions or concerns about the timing of vaccination in relation to your medications.
- If you don't see your medication listed, or if you take medications for another condition and you aren't sure if you need to consider timing, you can also look at the [COVID-19 vaccine planning considerations](#) posted on the BCCDC website for that condition (if available), and/or call 8-1-1 or talk to your health-care provider.

How else should I plan for my vaccine appointment?

- Review HealthLink BC's general information on [COVID-19 vaccines](#).
- In the 2-3 days leading up to your vaccine appointment, monitor yourself: are any of the typical symptoms of your condition new or worsening? If you aren't feeling well, rebook your vaccine appointment for another day. You won't lose your place in line. Consider reaching out to your health care provider about your symptoms.

What or who should I bring with me?

- Please bring your BC Services Card or CareCard to your appointment.
- You can bring any medical or mobility equipment that you need.
- If you need to, you can bring a trusted friend, family member or caregiver with you to support you through the process and/or translate for you if needed. Please only bring one person.

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What happens after my vaccine?

- Everyone who gets a COVID-19 vaccine will stay on location to be monitored for 15 minutes after they get their vaccine.
- You should tell a health-care provider at the vaccination site if you do not feel well.
- If you have any new or worsening symptoms once you go home, please call your health care team or 8-1-1. If you have a severe allergic reaction, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- You can learn more about what to expect after your vaccine [on the BCCDC website](#).

My vaccine planning checklist

- Read the COVID-19 vaccine information for my condition(s)
- Time my vaccine appointment around my medication and treatments (if relevant to me)
- Talk to my doctor if I have any questions or need any help planning my medication
- Monitor how I'm feeling leading up to my vaccination appointment. Is anything new or getting worse compared to how I usually feel?
- Plan to bring the medical and mobility equipment I need with me