

“I got AstraZeneca for my first dose. Which vaccine should I get for my second?”

INTRODUCTION

- If you got AstraZeneca for dose 1, you have a choice for dose 2. You can get AstraZeneca or you can get Moderna or Pfizer.
- It is important to get a second dose of any Covid-19 vaccine. After 2 doses, you will be fully vaccinated. Two doses give much better, longer lasting protection than one dose.
- Doctors, scientists, pharmacists, and patients in Canada made this guide. It is based on expert consensus. Our information is from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), and from government and scientific data.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How well will I be protected?

Covid-19 vaccines lower the risk of becoming sick with Covid-19. They lower the risk of going into hospital or dying from Covid-19. Two doses of any Covid-19 vaccine work much better than one.

We know that 2 doses of AstraZeneca work really well to protect you from Covid-19. We don't have as much data about switching to Moderna or Pfizer for dose 2. Vaccine science and early studies tell us that switching for dose 2 should protect you as well as or better than 2 doses of AstraZeneca.

What about variants?

The Delta variant was first found in India. It is spreading in Canada. The Delta variant spreads more easily than the other variants. Two doses of any Covid-19 vaccine will protect you more from the Delta variant than 1 dose.

Two doses of Moderna or Pfizer seem to protect people from becoming sick with the Delta variant better than two doses of AstraZeneca. We don't have as much data about switching to Moderna or Pfizer for dose 2. Early studies tell us that switching for dose 2 should protect you as well as or better than 2 doses of AstraZeneca.

What about side effects?

Side effects can happen after any Covid-19 vaccine. You might have a sore arm, headache, muscle pain, fever, or tiredness. They are a sign that your immune system is responding to the vaccine. Side effects should go away after one or two days.

We don't know if you will have more side effects if you have AstraZeneca, Moderna, or Pfizer for dose 2.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (continued)

What about serious blood clots (VITT)?

AstraZeneca has been linked with a blood clotting disease called Vaccine Induced Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia, or VITT. VITT is serious and can be deadly. About 17 people per million have had VITT after dose 1. About 2 people per million have had VITT after dose 2. This number may change as more people have dose 2 of AstraZeneca and we get more data.

Moderna and Pfizer vaccines do not seem to cause VITT.

Is it safe to “mix-and-match” vaccines?

“Mix-and-match” means having one brand or type of a vaccine for one dose and a different brand or type for other doses. It is safe to mix and match vaccines to complete a vaccine series. It is also common. For example, vaccines for polio and hepatitis have been mixed and matched. Mixing and matching vaccines does not cause long-term side effects. Vaccine experts around the world have said that mixing and matching Covid-19 vaccines is safe and will protect you well.

When should I get my second dose?

You can have dose 2 as soon as four weeks after dose 1. Studies suggest that having dose 2 at least eight weeks after dose 1 will protect you better. There is a tradeoff. If you wait longer, you will be more protected. But, if you get dose 2 sooner, you will be protected sooner.

How do I make this choice?

Remember: getting any Covid-19 vaccine for dose 2 will protect you. Here are some questions you can ask yourself that might help you decide:

- “How did I feel after dose 1?”
- “How worried am I about side effects and the risk of blood clots?”
- “Does my choice of vaccine change how long I have to wait for dose 2?”
- “Is one vaccine easier for me to get?”

If you have more questions, talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. They can help you make the best choice for you.

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