Viral vector-based COVID-19 Vaccine
(AstraZeneca or Covishield)

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and its complications, in addition to other measures such as physical distancing, wearing a medical mask or face covering, and hand washing.

Disease	Signs and symptoms	Possible complications
COVID-19	• Fever • Cough • Trouble breathing • Loss of smell • Fatigue • Headaches • Muscle aches • Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea • Overall sick feeling	• Pneumonia and other respiratory issues • Heart problems • Neurological problems • Death

The vaccine

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and its complications. AstraZeneca and Covishield vaccines can be given to people age 18 and over for whom RNA vaccines are contraindicated or who prefer to complete their vaccination with the same product.

Quebec experts recommend that people age 18 and over who received AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine as their 1st dose receive Pfizer or Moderna vaccine for their 2nd dose. Administration of a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine for the 2nd dose produces a better immune response than 2 doses of AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine. Administration of an AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine at least 8 weeks after a dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine does not appear to cause more reactions than 2 doses of RNA vaccine. However, people who received AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine as the 1st dose may decide to receive a 2nd dose of AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine.

AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine require 2 doses. After the 1st dose, AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccine efficacy is about 60 to 80% in preventing COVID-19. The 2nd dose should be given at least 8 weeks after the 1st dose for best protection. This 2nd dose is required to further reduce transmission, increase protection and duration of protection. The 1st dose takes approximately 2 weeks to be effective and the 2nd dose takes 1 week. **It is therefore important to continue to apply health measures until a majority of the population has received 2 doses of vaccine.**

For people who have had COVID-19 before the 1st dose of vaccine, a single dose is required. There is no risk of giving 2 doses of vaccine to someone who has had COVID-19, but the 2nd dose does not provide any additional protection for these people. For people with a weakened immune system or who had COVID-19 when they were given the 1st dose or in the days after they were vaccinated, 2 doses are required.

Symptoms after vaccination

Some symptoms may be caused by the vaccine (e.g., pain at the injection site). Other problem may occur by chance and are not related to the vaccine (e.g., cold, gastro). Most reactions are harmless and do not last long. These reactions occur more often with the 1st dose.

AstraZeneca and Covishield vaccines cannot cause COVID-19 because they do not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the disease. However, people who have been in contact with the virus in the days preceding or following their vaccination could still develop COVID-19.

Safety of the vaccine

AstraZeneca and Covishield vaccines are approved by Health Canada. They have met all the requirements for approval. They have been tested on a large number of people. Experts are closely monitoring any adverse reactions that could occur following vaccination and taking measures to ensure the safety and effectiveness of these vaccines.

Very rare cases of serious blood clots with drop in the number of blood cells that help clotting following vaccination with Astrazeneca vaccine or Covishield. These cases have been reported mostly after the 1st dose.

Votre
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Frequency	Known reactions to this vaccine	What to do

In most cases (more than 50% of people)	• Pain or tenderness at the injection site
	• Headache, fatigue
		• Apply a cold, damp compress at the injection site.
		• Use medication for fever or discomfort if needed.
		• See a doctor if symptoms are severe, especially if the following symptoms appear within a few days of vaccination:
		  – shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling or stomach pain;
		  – severe headache or headache that has lasted for a few days, blurred vision or bruises on the skin.

Very often (less than 50% of people	• Itching, swelling, warmth, redness or bruising at the injection site • Shivering, discomfort, nausea • Muscle soreness • Joint pain	
Often (less than 10% of people)	• Fever • Diarrhea (Covishield vaccine only)	
Very rarely (1 to 9 persons in 100,000)	• Blood clots with drop in the number of blood cells that help clotting within 4 to 20 days after the 1st dose	
Exceptionally (1 to 9 persons in 1 million)	• Blood clots with drop in the number of blood cells that help clotting within 4 to 20 days after the 2nd dose	

Shivering, discomfort, fatigue, muscle soreness and headache occur more often after the 1st dose.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, trouble breathing, loss of smell, etc.), consult the *COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool* to find out if you need to be tested:

https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/covid-19-symptom-self-assessment-tool/

We recommend that you stay at the clinic for at least 15 minutes after vaccination because allergic reactions may occur.
If an allergic reaction occurs, the symptoms will appear a few minutes after the vaccination. The person giving the vaccine will be able to treat this reaction immediately.

For any questions, contact the person giving the vaccine, or Info-Santé 811 or your doctor.