

Building confidence in Moderna: A guide for primary care providers using the PrOTCT framework Version 1, June 10, 2021

For additional provider-focused vaccine information, see [Vaccines Emerging Evidence \(CEP\)](#)
 For more talking tips for patient vaccine questions, see [Ensuring Patient Confidence in Vaccines \(CEP\)](#)

Key takeaways

1. There is no significant difference between the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.
2. Moderna and Pfizer have very similar side-effect profiles.
3. All approved vaccines are highly effective against COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death.

Pr:

Presume they will get the vaccine with positive statements

I have already gotten the COVID vaccine and I am happy to help you get it too.

Talking tips:

Moderna and Pfizer are effectively the same vaccine. You may have heard of more people getting the Pfizer vaccine – that is because supply chain issues have led to Canada having a lot more doses of the Pfizer vaccine than the Moderna vaccine.

Supporting info:

Canada has received over three times the amount of the Pfizer vaccine, with 5.5 million Moderna doses compared with receipt of over 17 million Pfizer doses.

O:

Offer to share your knowledge about the facts and your experience with having had the vaccine

Yes, I got the Moderna vaccine, and I know other people who have, too.

No, I didn't get the Moderna vaccine, but I would have. I got the first vaccine that was available to me.

I have been thinking a lot about this vaccine for my patients and educating myself on the science around it. Can I share some of what I know with you?

Talking tips:

- **Efficacy:** The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are very similar in how they work and how effective they are against COVID-19. They are pretty much identical at preventing the things we worry about which are hospitalization and serious illness. After 2 doses, Moderna is 94.1% effective (compared to 95% for Pfizer).
- **Efficacy against variants:** We are still learning how effective the vaccines are against the variants. Currently, it's known that the Moderna vaccine provides high protection against the Alpha (B.117) variant. Moderna is researching how protection against Alpha and other variants can be made even higher.
- **Side effects:** The side effects are very similar among vaccines. Those who receive Pfizer or Moderna may experience pain in their arm at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, or chills.
- **Adverse events:** Hundreds of millions of doses of Moderna have been administered worldwide. In Canada, the rate of serious adverse reaction for all vaccines, including Moderna, is very low: 6 people out of 100,000.

Efficacy: The effectiveness of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines is nearly identical. After one dose: 92.1% for Moderna, 92.6% for Pfizer.

Efficacy against variants:

- Against Alpha (B.117): 58.9% 15 days after 1st dose, and 85.7% 15 days after 2nd dose. Data for efficacy against other variants is still emerging ([COVID-END, 2021](#)).
- A recent study showed a 3rd booster dose of Moderna increased efficacy against the Gamma (P.1) and Beta (B.135) variants and found a modified version of the vaccine developed to fight the variants was also effective ([COVID-END, 2021](#)).

Supporting info:

Myocarditis and mRNA vaccines

- Cases of inflammation in and around the heart have been reported in individuals vaccinated with the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. Canada has a small number of reports of the condition, but the rates are not higher than expected in the general population.
- Cases are reported as mild, and individuals respond well to medications and rest ([PHAC, 2021](#)).
- Myocarditis is a condition that is commonly brought on by viral infection and the resultant immune response. It often has no symptoms and goes away on its own. The risk of harm from myocarditis/pericarditis is very small and is greatly outweighed by the risk of heart inflammation from COVID-19 infection.

T:

Tailor the recommendation to their specific health concerns

Here is why you are the right person to get the Moderna vaccine:

- You have [high blood pressure and diabetes] but have a high quality of health. To ensure we maintain the quality of life you have right now, it's important that you get vaccinated as soon as possible, and the Moderna vaccine is an excellent choice.
- **Pregnancy example:** Because you're pregnant, you're at increased risk of hospitalization, critical care and ventilation if you get COVID. Not only that, but research shows COVID can increase your risk of preterm birth, which carries a number of serious risks for your baby. To ensure your health and your baby's health, it's important that you get vaccinated as soon as possible, and the Moderna vaccine is an excellent choice.
- **Good general health example:** Even though you are in good health, you are still at risk for serious illness due to COVID – particularly with highly transmissible variants circulating in Ontario. As well, even a mild COVID infection can cause “long COVID” symptoms. If you want to ensure you stay in good health, it's important that you get vaccinated as soon as possible, and the Moderna vaccine is an excellent choice.

Talking tips:

Underlying health conditions: Adults of any age with one or more underlying medical conditions or comorbidities are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Conditions with an elevated risk ratio include: cancer, CVD, chronic respiratory disease, kidney disease, diabetes, gout, Down syndrome, organ transplant, immunosuppression and immunodeficiency, obesity, and sickle cell disease ([BCCDC, 2021](#)).

Supporting info:

Pregnancy: Of those infected with COVID-19, 7-11% of pregnant individuals will require hospitalization and 1-4% will require admission to ICU ([SOGC, 2021](#)).

Good general health: The risks of COVID-19 are serious, even with asymptomatic or mild infection. Research has shown that lung abnormalities and damage can occur even in those with asymptomatic infection ([Nature, 2020](#), [Lancet, 2020](#)). As well, the symptoms of “long COVID” can last for months and include chronic fatigue, shortness of breath, unrelenting fevers, gastrointestinal problems, lost sense of smell, short-term-memory loss, bruising, gynecological problems, and an erratic heartbeat.

C:

Address specific concerns (should not be the bulk of the conversation)

Talking tip:

Are there any particular concerns about this vaccine you want me to address?

Respond to patient concerns with facts. Don't bring up misinformation or rumors if they are not identified by the patient. Some concerns may include:

Misinformation about Moderna causing blood clots, stroke, heart attacks and long-term autoimmune disorders.

- Viral vector vaccines (AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson) are the vaccines currently associated with rare blood clots that have the potential to cause strokes and heart attacks. mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) are not associated with these clots.
- As of April, out of the 180 million doses of Pfizer and Moderna administered in the U.S., no blood clots were reported.
- There is no evidence to suggest that the Moderna vaccine can cause autoimmune diseases.

Supporting info:

Concern that this is Moderna's first product.

- Moderna may be less familiar to people than Pfizer, but it's not a new company. It's over a decade old and was formed explicitly for the purpose of developing mRNA technologies.
- When the pandemic started, Moderna was able to draw on 10 previous years of research into mRNA technology in developing its vaccine.
- Many find it impressive that while the vaccine is its first product on the market, Moderna's vaccine is one of the most effective ever produced.

For answers to other patient questions, see CEP's Ensuring Patient Confidence in Vaccines resource:

- [mRNA vaccine questions](#)
- [Vaccine safety and adverse events](#)
- [Mixing COVID vaccines](#)
- [Vaccine development](#)

T:

Talk through a specific plan for where and when to get the vaccine

Talking tip:

The best thing you can do for your health is to get vaccinated. Let's schedule your first dose right now.

This Resource was developed by the Centre for Effective Practice. This Resource was also subject to external review by health care providers and other relevant stakeholders. The development of this Resource was funded by the Government of Ontario as part of the Knowledge Translation in Primary Care.

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