

## QUESTIONS UNIQUE TO CHRISTIAN HORIZONS

***Q: When will Christian Horizons' Direct Support Employees and People who use our services have access to Covid-19 vaccines?***

**A:** At this time (June 3<sup>rd</sup>) all employee, and people who use our services have had access to their first does of the COVID-19 vaccines. Access to second doses for COVID-19 vaccines is being determined by local public health departments. Currently Priority access to second doses is available for employees and those who use our services.

***Q Will the COVID-19 vaccine be mandatory for employees and people who use services?***

**A:** Christian Horizons will follow provincial and ministry requirements around COVID-19 vaccines. The messaging from both the provincial government in Ontario and Saskatchewan has so far been that the COVID-19 vaccine has not been made mandatory at this time. A new COVID-19 Vaccination Policy will be released very soon with further details around vaccination for employees.

***Q: Will employees and people who use services still need to use PPE after being vaccinated?***

**A:** At this time, the recommendation remains that PPE is worn after having been vaccinated.

When testing the currently approved COVID-19 vaccines the trials focused on protection for the individual who received the vaccine. All of the vaccines effectively prevent the individual who has received them from displaying symptoms or becoming ill after a COVID-19 exposure. It is unknown if the vaccines decrease viral levels enough within the body to prevent transmission to others. This is being actively researched with promising findings. We have seen in different countries the lessening of PPE requirements as vaccinations go up and COVID-19 cases come down. It is expected that Canada will approach things similarly.

Christian Horizons will continue to follow both the Provincial Government and local ministry guidelines.

***Q: Is it possible to test positive for COVID-19 after being vaccinated?***

**A:** Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine will not cause you to test positive for COVID-19 when having a test done. This is because there is no live virus in any of the available or in development COVID-19 vaccines.

It is possible to still become sick with COVID-19 after being vaccinated. The likelihood of becoming infected after being vaccinated is significantly lower (65-95% depending on the vaccine). Most importantly the likelihood of being admitted to hospital or death due to the COVID-19 virus after being vaccinated is close to zero.

***Q: What do we know about potential Long-Term Effects from COVID-19 vaccines?***

**A:** Viral Vector vaccines like the AstraZeneca and Johnson and Johnson vaccines have been around for decades with no reported long-term complications.

mRNA vaccines have been in human trials for various illnesses for over a decade, and there have been no reported long-term concerns. See [here](#).

Further as shared by our guest panelists Dr. Gautier and Dr. Sankar on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 vaccines are made to be destroyed by our body so that it can train the immune system. This means there is nothing left in your system except for the immune memory to cause long term side effects. Long term side effects in medicine are caused from prolonged regular exposure to a treatment over numerous years (eg. Daily medication).

***Q: Do the vaccines work against the different variants?***

A: Real world delivery of COVID-19 vaccines in the United Kingdoms, United States of America and Israel have shown significant decreases in the number of COVID-19 cases including variants. Leading researchers to conclude that the vaccines are showing effectiveness against the variants of concern including the Delta Variant. We are also seeing significant reductions in Canadian COVID-19 cases and intensive care hospitalizations in the recent weeks.

***Q: Can you still transmit COVID-19 if you have been vaccinated?***

A: To transmit a virus from one person to another, the infected individual must have sufficient virus in their system to risk it passing to someone else. What has been shown with widespread vaccine campaigns is a significant decrease in community spread of COVID-19 when vaccination rates are high. This suggests that while it may still be possible the likelihood is significantly reduced.

***Q: How were the COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada?***

A: In Canada an Interim order pathway was established for any vaccines, medications, or tests related to COVID-19. "An interim order is one of the fastest mechanisms available to the federal government for putting in place temporary regulations to help make health products available to address large-scale public health emergencies.

This interim order facilitates timely access for Canadians to drugs and vaccines that have demonstrated the ability to diagnose, prevent, treat or cure COVID-19. The interim order introduces temporary regulations to expedite the authorization for importing, selling and advertising COVID-19-related drugs without compromising patient safety."

For more information on this and additional links see [here](#)

***Q: People of childbearing years both men and women may have concerns about fertility issues related to COVID-19, what is known about this?***

A: Outlined by the society of obstetricians and gynecologists of Canada "There is absolutely no evidence, and no theoretic reason to suspect that the COVID-19 vaccine could impair male or female fertility. These rumors are unfounded and harmful" to read their full statement please click [here](#).

The original concerns online were based on the potential similarity of the spike protein targeted in the vaccines to a protein required for placenta implantation. If infertility were to occur due to immunization and by building an immunity to the spike protein it would also be expected that individuals who have been infected with COVID-19 would show infertility. Real-world data has not shown an increase in infertility for either group.

***Q: Is COVID-19 more deadly than the Flu?***

A: Stat Canada have released their report for 2020 outlining the number of excess deaths for the calendar year. Based on modeling of the population, it is possible to predict how many deaths would be expected each year.

# Covid-19 Vaccine

## Frequently Asked Questions



Researchers then look at total reported deaths and can look for inconsistency. The report specifically addresses the COVID-19 Pandemic and can be found [here](#).

### **Q: Are the COVID-19 vaccines still in Phase 3 trials?**

A: Phase 3 trials for the COVID-19 vaccines have been completed. Phase 3 trials included thousands of volunteers who received the COVID-19 vaccines. It is during phase 3 trials that efficacy and safety data was compiled and submitted to Health Canada. Currently the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine trials are continuing to monitor the participants who were in phase 3 to assess long term protection and to continue monitoring for safety. This is a standard practice for new medications, vaccines, and medical tests. Reuters did an excellent fact check on this, it is more United States of America centric but explains the situation well with supporting evidence it can be found [here](#).

### **Q: Which vaccine will be available for people who use our services and employees?**

A: Christian Horizons continues to advocate provincially for ease of access to vaccines for the people who use our services and our employees. As we are aware of what vaccine will be available in each community, that information will be widely shared. Each health unit in Ontario is approaching distribution differently, it has been our experience that employees and people who use services have had access to all of Astrazeneca, Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. The decision as to which vaccine is available is based on where the individual is receiving the vaccine.

## MRNA VACCINES

### **Q: Which of the available vaccines are mRNA vaccines?**

A: The vaccines developed and brought to market by Pfizer and Moderna are both mRNA based vaccines.

### **Q: How do mRNA vaccines work?**

A: mRNA vaccines work by teaching our cells how to make a protein unique to COVID-19. Our body's immune system then creates memory cells to that protein and when exposed to the COVID-19 virus our immune system is ready to combat the virus more effectively. See Government of Canada resource [here](#).

### **Q: Are mRNA vaccines safe?**

A: mRNA vaccines underwent strict safety monitoring to learn more about the approval process visit the Government of Canada's resources [here](#) and [here](#).

A: While mRNA vaccines are newly approved as a method for vaccination, they are not a recent technology. As per the CDC mRNA vaccines are and have been studied for decades to treat several illnesses. See the statement [here](#).

### **Q: Will the developed mRNA vaccines be effective against new variants of COVID-19?**

A: Statements by both Moderna and Pfizer have outlined that they are confident the vaccine will be effective against variants of COVID-19. This is because the protein the vaccines help our bodies build immunity to is the protein the virus uses to enter our cells and cause infection. If the cell were to mutate and not have this protein it would be unable to cause infection.

### **Q: How do I know if it is safe for me to be vaccinated?**

## Covid-19 Vaccine

### Frequently Asked Questions



**A:** It is important that anyone who has safety concerns related to their personal health situation speak with their health care team. Members of your healthcare team may include family physician, pharmacist and any specialists involved in your care.

#### ***Q: Were stem cells used in the development of the mRNA vaccines?***

**A:** No stem cells were used to develop or create the mRNA vaccines. In testing the COVID-19 vaccines safety and effectiveness a lab cultured stem cell line was utilized. There are no stem cells within the vaccines themselves. A more thorough explanation can be found [here](#).

Current vaccines for rubella, chickenpox, hepatitis A, shingles as well as medications for hemophilia, rheumatoid arthritis and cystic fibrosis utilized these cell lines in similar ways to ensure they were safe for human use.

We recognize that people may have questions and ethical concerns related to the use and source of stem cells in vaccine testing. Given that employees and people who use Christian Horizons' services approach these questions from diverse faiths, denominations, and perspectives, each person is encouraged to learn more about the process for themselves or with support and to be aware of any official position related to their own faith or denomination.

## VIRAL VECTOR VACCINES

#### ***Q: Which of the available vaccines are viral vector vaccines?***

**A:** The vaccines developed and brought to market by AstraZeneca and Janssen (Johnson and Johnson) are viral vector vaccine.

#### ***Q: How do Viral Vector vaccines work?***

**A:** Viral vector vaccines work by using a harmless virus (such as an adenovirus) as a delivery system. This method of using an adenovirus to deliver a protein unique to the COVID-19 virus that your body can mount an immune response to in order to identify and combat the COVID-19 virus when you are exposed to it has been done for vaccine development for decades. See Government of Canada resource [here](#).

#### ***Q: Are Viral Vector vaccines safe?***

**A:** Viral vector vaccines underwent strict safety monitoring to learn more about the approval process visit the Government of Canada's resources [here](#) and [here](#).

**A:** Viral Vector vaccines that use adenovirus' as a delivery method have been used in previous vaccines. A notable viral vector vaccine that uses the adenovirus is the Ebola vaccine.

#### ***Q: Will the developed Viral Vector vaccines be effective against new variants of COVID-19?***

**A:** Statements by the World Health Organization outlines that the AstraZeneca and Janssen vaccines are approved and should be distributed in regions where COVID-19 variants are circulating. See the entire statement and recommendation from the World Health Organization [here](#).

#### ***Q: How do I know if it is safe for me to be vaccinated?***

## Covid-19 Vaccine

### Frequently Asked Questions



**A:** It is important that anyone who has safety concerns related to their personal health situation speak with their health care team. Members of your healthcare team may include family physician, pharmacist and any specialists involved in your care.

#### ***Q: Why is the vaccine by AstraZeneca not being recommended for people 65 and over?***

**A:** The national advisory committee on immunization (NACI) has recommended the age cut off due to limited sample size of people over the age of 65 in the original trials. Canada is in the fortunate position to have access to a number of vaccines and with the most significant risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19 being age it allows Canada to prioritize the mRNA vaccines for people over the age of 65. For more information from NACI about all of the vaccines that have been approved see [here](#).

#### ***Q: The viral vector vaccines have lower efficacy than the mRNA vaccines. If offered a viral vector vaccine should I wait for a mRNA vaccine?***

**A:** While the efficacy is lower for the viral vector vaccines with regards to mild COVID-19 all the approved vaccines have shown similar effectiveness in reducing serious illness requiring hospitalization and deaths due to COVID-19. This is great news, if offered any of the available vaccines an individual should be confident that they are significantly limiting the likelihood of serious health outcomes if they were to be infected.

#### ***Q: Were stem cells used in the development of the viral vector vaccines?***

**A:** The AstraZeneca and Janssen vaccines used a stem cell line that has been replicated in a lab for over 50 years and used in the development of many vaccines and other medical treatments. For the AstraZeneca vaccine, the stem cell line was used to grow the adenovirus – a harmless virus that is used in the vaccine. Once grown, the adenovirus is removed from the cells and purified. There are no stem cells in the vaccine itself. A more thorough explanation can be found [here](#).

We recognize that people may have questions and ethical concerns related to the use and source of stem cells in vaccine testing/development. Given that employees and people who use Christian Horizons' services approach these questions from diverse faiths, denominations, and perspectives, each person is encouraged to learn more about the process for themselves or with support and to be aware of any official position related to their own faith or denomination.

## EDUCATION

#### ***Q: What is Christian Horizons doing to ensure accurate information is available?***

**A:** Several resources continue to be developed around our COVID-19 response, guided by public health and ministry recommendations. On our intranet and internet sites resources specific to COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccines have been developed with links to sources.

#### ***Q: What are the COVID-19 vaccine webinars Christian Horizons is hosting?***

**A:** Christian Horizons is working with several professionals to answer your questions about the COVID-19 vaccines. These webinars are open to employees, the people who use our services and their families. For more information and to register for any upcoming webinars please click [here](#).

## REGULATIONS

***Q: Is it appropriate for Christian Horizons to track the vaccination status of employees and people that use our services?***

**A:** In Ontario, Christian Horizons is obligated to comply with the Emergency Order Regulation 121/20, which requires every reasonably necessary measure to respond to, prevent, and alleviate a COVID-19 outbreak. For Christian Horizons this includes collecting information from employees about their infection and vaccination status. For people who use the services of Christian Horizons this includes collecting information about their infection and vaccination status plus documenting medical services and medications. We are working very hard to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and all evidence shows that the approved vaccines reduce serious illness and prevents COVID-19.

In Saskatchewan, Christian Horizons follows the advice of the Office of the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner regarding vaccine reporting for organizations and employers.

***Q: Are there any privacy concerns that I should be aware of in reporting my vaccination record with Christian Horizons?***

**A:** Christian Horizons is an employer regulated by the Provinces of Ontario and Saskatchewan governments rather than the Federal Government. Ontario Regulation 121/20 requires Christian Horizons to collect information from employees about their exposure to the virus and any other health conditions that affect the ability of employees to provide supports. In Ontario and Saskatchewan all records and data for vaccination status are stored in keeping with the applicable privacy legislation.

***Q: Is it legal for employers to insist that employees get a vaccination?***

**A:** Christian Horizons is following the advice and direction of Public Health Ontario and the Saskatchewan Health Authority regarding recommendations for vaccination. This advice and direction is included in the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for Christian Horizons.

Christian Horizons is not insisting current employees get vaccinated; however, new hires are required to provide proof of vaccination.

***Q: Is it unconstitutional for Christian Horizons to be asking anyone for their personal medical information, including, but not limited to, whether employees have been vaccinated or not?***

**A:** It is not unconstitutional for Christian Horizons or its employees to ask about an employee's vaccination status; the constitution applies to actions by public or government bodies but not Christian Horizons actions. People, including work colleagues, regularly discuss getting vaccinated and their vaccination status. It is an important topic of conversation among people these days and natural to talk about it. There is nothing wrong with talking about vaccination with your colleagues if you wish. We should all continue to politely encourage each other to be vaccinated if we can, for the health and wellbeing of all employees and persons who use our services. However, if a colleague expresses discomfort with the topic or asks not to talk about it, we should honour and respect that request.

***Q: Can I make a human rights complaint regarding a request for vaccination status?***

**A:** Christian Horizons is committed to human rights accommodation up to the point of undue hardship where an employee is unable to vaccinate for human rights-protected reasons. Christian Horizons employees who decline the vaccine will be provided accommodation in their employment based on any applicable protected ground in the *Human Rights Code* in either Ontario or Saskatchewan. Such situations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.