



Southern Chiefs' Organization COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases. Immunization is much safer than getting the potentially deadly COVID-19 virus.

Vaccines also provide protection for certain people who cannot get the vaccine, such as immunocompromised people and people with certain allergies. If the majority of people in a community are vaccinated, that helps prevent the spread of the virus, which protects the health of the whole community.

2. Why are First Nation people a priority this time?

First Nation people are a priority at this time for a number of reasons including:

- First Nation people are particularly vulnerable to this deadly virus, largely due to colonial legacies which have led to lower health outcomes overall.
- While the overall test positivity rate is close to 10% for all Manitobans, that number jumps to nearly 17% for First Nation people.
- First Nations make up close to 60% of all active cases in the province and 40% of new cases.
- First Nations are over-represented in hospitalizations and ICU admissions due to COVID-19.
- Unlike the majority of cases in Manitoba, First Nations people are most likely to be infected through close contact to known cases of COVID-19

3. Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes!

All vaccines are peer-reviewed and analyzed for their safety and effectiveness before they are granted approval by Health Canada. They have to go through a strict vetting process and must be shown to be safe and effective before they can be used. After approval, they continue to be monitored closely for their safety and effectiveness.

Four vaccines have been approved by Health Canada so far for use, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Janssen, and Pfizer. Millions of people worldwide have already been vaccinated with more people receiving the COVID-19 vaccine every day!

First Nation Health experts have advised us that this is the best tool we have to protect First Nation people from the coronavirus.

4. I am hesitant to get a COVID-19 vaccine, what should I do?

Some people are hesitant to get vaccinated against COVID-19 for a variety of reasons, including concerns and feelings of mistrust towards the Canadian medical establishment, inaccurate information shared about vaccines online and on social media, and the fact that the COVID-19 vaccines have been produced relatively quickly.

First Nation health experts encourage everyone to be vaccinated as our best defense against this deadly virus, which has had a disproportionate effect on First Nation people, communities, and livelihoods.

If you're still hesitant after reading this FAQ guide then we highly recommend for you to contact your local health station or clinic where you can get trustworthy information on the vaccine, its distribution, and any other questions you may have.



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5. What is the difference between the vaccines?

All of the vaccines offer excellent protection against the COVID-19 virus. Early results from clinical trials show the Moderna vaccine to be 94% effective at preventing COVID-19 infections that produce symptoms. You are still able to get the virus and spread it after being vaccinated, however, you are far less likely to experience serious outcomes from the virus.

The Moderna vaccine, which is given in two doses several weeks apart, gives the immune system a preview of what the real virus looks like without causing the disease. This preview gives the immune system time to design powerful antibodies that can neutralize the virus and protect us from infection.

6. Why are First Nations receiving the Moderna vaccine, not a different vaccine?

All vaccines are shown to be highly effective, but the Moderna vaccine is easier to transport and was therefore selected for shipment to First Nations. Other vaccines, such as Pfizer, are more difficult to transport.

First Nation people who are eligible can also be vaccinated at one of the province's supersites, located in Winnipeg, Brandon, Morden, Thompson, and Selkirk, or one of the various provincial pop-up clinics. You can [book an appointment online](#) or by calling **1-844-626-8222**. We encourage everyone who is eligible to receive a vaccine, any vaccine, to be vaccinated!

7. When can I get vaccinated?

Since all COVID-19 vaccines are new, supply is limited at this stage.

All Indigenous people in Manitoba aged 12 and older are eligible for vaccination. First Nations have received vaccine shipments to immunize their adult populations and future shipments are on their way to finish off adult populations as needed as well as youth 12 years and older.

First Nation people aged 12 and older living off-reserve can book their first doses at provincial super sites and pop-up clinics. Any First Nation citizen aged 12 and older who has received their first dose, at least three weeks ago for Pfizer and four weeks ago for Moderna, can book their second dose with the province as well.

You can self-identify as First Nation when booking your appointment with the province and request to go to an Indigenous clinic. There are five clinics located in Winnipeg (two locations), Brandon, Portage la Prairie, and Thompson. These clinics were created to be a culturally safe space for all Indigenous peoples.

8. I live off-reserve, when and where can I be vaccinated?

As mentioned above, First Nation people living off reserve can access provincial vaccination [supersites and pop-up clinics](#) when they become eligible for vaccination. You must book an appointment first by calling **1-844-626-8222** or you can [book online](#). You will be asked to self-identify as First Nations as part of the appointment-booking process. The call centre is open seven days a week from 6:00 AM – 8:00 PM. Please note **that family members and caregivers can make an appointment on a loved one's behalf.**



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9. Who should NOT get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Several different groups of people are not able to receive the vaccine, including immune-compromised people, infants, and children under the age of 12.

The COVID-19 vaccine should not be given to anyone who is allergic to the active substance or any ingredient in the vaccines, or if you have had a severe allergic reaction after the first dose.

Pregnant people and those who are breastfeeding should consult with their doctor or medical professional.

10. Are there side effects from COVID-19 vaccines?

While safe, there can be side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days, similar to a flu shot. It's also very normal and natural to experience some side effects as your immune system responds to the vaccine's healing components.

Responses may include:

- redness, swelling, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired
- headache
- fever or chills
- body aches or sore joints
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea), vomiting (throwing up), or loose stool (diarrhea)
- swollen lymph nodes

After you receive the vaccine, you will be monitored for at least 15 minutes in the unlikely event you experience an allergic reaction such as hives or swelling of the throat.

If you experience an adverse event or medical condition of concern after you leave the place of vaccination, contact your health station/clinic or call Health Links-Info Santé in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200, or toll free elsewhere in Manitoba at 1-888-315-9257.

11. Is there a cost to getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

No! All COVID-19 vaccines are free of cost.

12. Once I get the COVID-19 vaccine, can I stop wearing a mask and social distancing, and go back to 'normal' life?

Unfortunately, we are still far away from when we can return to 'normal' pre-COVID -19 life.

You should continue to:

- Follow all health orders until the majority of people are vaccinated
- Stay at home when sick
- Practice social distancing and wear a mask when in an indoor public space
- Wash/sanitize your hands frequently and avoid touching your face when out in public
- Limit social contacts as much as possible