



## **MCFN Statement on the COVID-19 Vaccination**

**January 14, 2021**

MCFN is providing the following information as a backgrounder to the COVID-19 Vaccination.

### **Health Canada Approval**

Health Canada has authorized the first COVID-19 mRNA vaccines for use in Canada, the Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna, after a thorough and rigorous review of the evidence to ensure the vaccines meet the standards of safety, quality and efficacy for authorization in Canada. Health Canada are using a fast-tracked process that allows manufacturers to submit data as it becomes available. Health Canada will continue to monitor the safety of the vaccines as they become more available.

mRNA vaccines are a new type of vaccine. Many types of vaccines are weakened or inactivated virus or a part of a virus to trigger an immune response inside your body. However, instead of using the live virus that causes COVID-19, mRNA vaccines teach our cells how to make a protein that will trigger an immune response. Once triggered, our body then makes antibodies. These antibodies help us fight the infection if the real virus does enter our body in the future.

“Vaccine development and approval in Canada” retrieved from;

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/development-approval-infographic/vaccine-overview-infographic-eng.pdf>

### **Why are Indigenous Communities a Priority?**

COVID-19 is having a serious impact on Indigenous communities by effecting the health and wellbeing of families, businesses and communities. With the development, approval and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines it will help prevent the spread of the COVID-19, protect our most vulnerable populations and keep our communities and businesses operating.

Given the arrival of the COVID-19 Vaccine and it being staggered over several months, National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends that key populations in which the vaccine is deemed safe and effective based on clinical evidence available at the time of vaccine availability should be prioritized for COVID-19 immunization.

Some Indigenous communities or members of those communities will be identified as being at increased risk. They will be among the first groups to receive the vaccines.

Priority for early COVID-19 vaccination will be given to the following populations:

- health care workers who have direct contact with patients, including: those who work in health care settings, including personal support workers
- adults in Indigenous communities



As additional COVID-19 vaccine(s) and supplies become available, the following populations should be offered vaccinations:

- health care workers not included in the initial rollout.
- residents and staff of all other shared living settings, such as: homeless shelters, correctional facilities, housing for migrant workers
- essential workers who face additional risks to maintain services for the functioning of society

MCFN has been invited to sit on the regional task force for Haldimand-Norfolk-Hamilton-Brant, to help determine how the COVID-19 vaccine will be rolled out regionally. This includes determining the most vulnerable/target populations and ensuring best practices are utilized to ensure these individuals are immunized safely and with priority. Representatives from administration and Social and Health Services have been appointed to represent MCFN’s best interests on this task-force. Once the vaccine is rolled out at a local level, Social and Health Services will be working directly with the Haldimand-Norfolk Public Health unit to determine how interested MCFN membership will receive the vaccine safely and effectively.

At this time, the COVID-19 vaccination is a voluntary vaccination, similar to the standard flu shot. It is a personal choice that you can make to protect yourself, your family and your community. MCFN will remain committed to sharing information on the vaccine from credible sources, in order to help you with your decision. Recipients will also be advised of the risks and benefits prior to the administration of the vaccine and will be required to complete an immunization consent form, distributed through Indigenous Services Canada. The MCFN Chief and Council will be working towards developing a priority-based list for our community to ensure our most vulnerable populations are protected, as well as our essential health care workers.

### Risks and Benefits

Risks	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Long term data has not been established to state how long the vaccine will be effective</li> <li>➤ If you choose not to receive the vaccine, there is the risk of contracting the virus and becoming very ill, possibly experiencing long term effects from the COVID-19 virus</li> <li>➤ If the majority of the population does not receive the vaccine, COVID-19 virus will be a Public Health issue for years to come</li> <li>➤ Four cases of Bell’s palsy — a facial paralysis that is often temporary — were observed among 18,000 volunteers over two months in the Pfizer/BioNTech trial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ You cannot get the virus from the vaccine; the vaccine will not make you sick</li> <li>➤ We as a population will eradicate the virus if the majority of the population choose to receive the vaccine</li> <li>➤ Severe side effects for both vaccines have so far been extremely rare</li> <li>➤ By choosing to receive the vaccine, you are consenting to receive a synthetic version of a molecule called “messenger RNA” to hack into human cells and effectively turn them into vaccine-making factories, allowing your body to ward off a COVID-19 virus</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If you carry an EpiPen for anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions), you will have to hold off on receiving the vaccine</li> <li>➤ 0-15 years old and 0-17 years old (depending on vaccine) will not receive the current vaccines</li> <li>➤ Pregnant and breastfeeding individuals will not be vaccinated with this rollout</li> <li>➤ Individuals with an autoimmune disorder/diagnosis will need to consult with a healthcare professional before receiving the vaccine</li> <li>➤ Of those vaccinated, some felt pain at the injection site. Many also felt fatigue, headache and muscle pain and some had temporarily swollen lymph nodes</li> <li>➤ As the vaccines are new, scientists do not know for certain the potential long term side effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Side effects from both vaccines are very rare</li> <li>➤ As is normal for any vaccine, close and continued monitoring for safety and efficacy data as it is delivered will be essential</li> <li>➤ For any vaccine to reach the public, it has undergone careful evaluation by Health Canada and passed all safety standards</li> <li>➤ We don't have long-term evidence yet, but the chance of this type of vaccine causing long-term harm is very unlikely</li> <li>➤ Making the choice to be vaccinated means we will eventually live without social distancing, masks and screening, and we will be able to visit our family and friends</li> <li>➤ By choosing to receive the vaccine you are assisting with eradicating a virus that will continue to mutate and become exponentially more infectious with time</li> </ul>
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**Priority Groups**

In Ontario, priority for early COVID-19 vaccination will be given to the following populations:

- residents and staff of shared living settings who provide care for seniors' adults 70 years of age and older, with order of priority: beginning with adults 80 years of age and older decreasing the age limit by 5-year increments to age 70 years as supply becomes available

The MCFN Chief and Council will determine the priority for COVID-19 vaccination within our community in the near future and will communicate it to the membership.

