

# ASTRAZENECA COVID-19 VACCINE FACT SHEET

## Is the AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine Safe?

- After a thorough, independent assessment of the currently available scientific data, Health Canada and NACI (National Advisory Committee on Immunization) have concluded that the AstraZeneca vaccine is safe.
- Vaccination is the best way to protect you and those around you from serious illnesses like COVID-19. However, like any medication, vaccines may have potential side effects.
- Through regular post vaccine monitoring, evidence suggests that a very rare blood clotting event may be linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine. This side effect is called vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT).

## What are the normal reactions that could occur with this vaccine?

- Minor and temporary adverse events, such as headache, fever, fatigue or pain at the injection site are common after all vaccinations and similarly can be expected after the AstraZeneca vaccine.
- People should seek medical attention if they experience any persistent, new or worsening symptoms.

## What is the risk of blood clots associated with this vaccine?

- Very rare events of blood clots associated with low levels of blood platelets following immunization with the AstraZeneca vaccine were first reported in Europe in early March.
- Reported cases of these adverse events have been seen after the first dose, usually within the first 20 days after immunization.
- Blood clots occur in about one in 20 (5%) of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 and in about one in 100 (1%) of patients who have COVID-19 but were not hospitalized.
- Comparatively, although evidence is still emerging about the risk of VITT associated with AstraZeneca, the newest estimate of occurrence of is approximately 1 in 100,000 vaccines.
  - Considering the population of HPEC, this rate means it is not very likely that even one individual in HPEC would experience this event, even if all remaining individuals who are eligible were vaccinated with AstraZeneca.
  - However, we still continue to see local hospitalization and death, which could be prevented with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

## What should you do if you received an AstraZeneca vaccine, and you are concerned about blood clots?

- Similar to monitoring for any medication side effect, you should seek prompt medical attention immediately if you have any of the following symptoms after vaccination:
  - shortness of breath, chest pain
  - leg swelling
  - persistent abdominal (belly) pain
  - neurological symptoms, such as severe and persistent worsening headaches or blurred vision
  - skin bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the site of the injection.
- If you experienced rare blood clots with unusual platelets following your first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, it is not recommended that you receive a second dose of any version of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

## What are the non-medicinal components of the AstraZeneca vaccine?

Disodium edetate dihydrate (EDTA); Ethanol;  
L-Histidine; L-Histidine hydrochloride monohydrate;  
Magnesium chloride hexahydrate;  
Polysorbate 80; Sodium chloride; Sucrose

## Should I get the AstraZeneca vaccine if I am eligible?

- NACI has deemed this vaccine safe for individuals age 30 and over.
- Ontario is currently offering the vaccine to anyone aged 40 and over.
- The chance of blood clots following immunization with AstraZeneca is very low, and it is much lower than your chance of getting COVID-19 or getting blood clots if you have COVID-19.
- It is recommended that you take the first vaccine that is offered to you – it will not only offer excellent protection to you but will also help us stop the spread in the community at large, leading us out of this Pandemic.

## Resources:

- <https://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2021/75389a-eng.php>
- <https://thrombosiscanada.ca/wp-uploads/uploads/2021/04/COVID-19-vaccine-and-Thrombosis-FAQs-April-2-2021-Final.pdf>
- [https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19\\_vaccine\\_info\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19_vaccine_info_sheet.pdf)
- <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/pdf/astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-pm-en.pdf>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines/summary-updated-statement-april-23-2021.html>

Other questions? Talk to your health care provider or call our COVID Information Line at 613-966-5500 | Toll Free 1-800-267-2803 | TTY: Dial 711 | Website: [hpePublicHealth.ca](http://hpePublicHealth.ca)

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