Who can I talk to if I am feeling worried about getting the vaccine?

It is helpful to talk to someone that you trust about what you’re feeling with COVID-19 vaccines. You can talk to a trusted family member, an Elder, a community member working with any of this region’s Indigenous services, or your health care provider.

Talking and sharing is a helpful place to start if you are feeling worried about getting the vaccine.

If you are ever feeling like you need to talk to someone right away about your feelings around the vaccine or any mental health needs with the pandemic, you can call the Hope for Wellness Helpline or online chat: 1-855-242-3310 or hopeforwellness.ca.

I am having a disagreement with a loved one, how can I help them learn more about the vaccine?

Many people in Canada agree that vaccines are an important part of preventative health care. Lots of people get annual flu shots which have been helpful to keep them healthy. Every adult must make the decision that is best for them with the information that is available. You can provide your loved one with up-to-date vaccine information using our FAQ series.

How do I know that I can trust the vaccine?

The vaccines available in Canada have undergone rigorous testing. All approved COVID-19 vaccines have been approved by Health Canada on the basis of their quality safety and efficacy. All the vaccines were proven to be effective at preventing COVID-19 symptoms, and preventing severe complications of COVID-19 such as hospitalization and death. Indigenous health care service providers across the country strongly recommend Indigenous adults receive the vaccine.
What is vaccine hesitancy?
Vaccine hesitancy means feeling unsure about getting the vaccine. It is understandable for Indigenous people to lack trust in Westernized medical care. Negative past experiences can make some people feel worried about getting the vaccine. Some may feel unsure for other reasons. Talk to an Elder, someone you trust, or your healthcare provider, about what you’re feeling. Make a decision that is best for you using accurate information about the vaccine.

What are some ways I can build a safer space for myself to get the vaccine?
Self-care before and after getting the vaccine is important to ensure you feel safe and ready to get both of your doses. Scheduling some time to do a personal activity you enjoy as a reward for taking care of your health can be helpful. Virtually connecting with a safe person and talking about your experience, your hesitations, and your thoughts about the vaccine can also be helpful. You have the right to ask questions before and after receiving the vaccine.

Adapted with permission from COVID-19 vaccine communications and educational resources created by the Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle and Mamaway Wìídokdaadwin Indigenous Interprofessional Primary Care Team.
Peel Public Health
COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions
Body: Understand how vaccines help the body

Can a COVID-19 Vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?
No, you can’t. The vaccines teach the immune system to fight COVID-19.

How does the COVID-19 Vaccine help me?
After receiving the vaccine, most people are protected from severe symptoms and death from COVID-19. The more of us that are vaccinated, the sooner we can stop the spread.

COVID-19 vaccines help your body’s immune system to prepare to fight the virus if you are exposed to it. This means you are less likely to get sick if you are exposed.

Do I still have to wear a mask and socially distance?
The COVID-19 vaccines are one important way of stopping the pandemic. Because it is still possible to become infected with and spread the virus even after you have the vaccine it is still important for you to continue to wear for you to continue to wear a mask, wash your hands, and follow physical distancing guidelines. These will all be important tools to stop the pandemic until enough people get the COVID-19 vaccine to stop the spread of the virus. Using all of these tools in combination is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Will these vaccines alter my DNA?
No. The purpose of any vaccine is to mimic the infection, to get the body to build immunity to the virus but not cause the illness. The COVID-19 vaccine does not alter your DNA. It will train the immune system to recognize COVID-19 and respond quickly if you are ever exposed to the actual COVID-19 virus.
Do the vaccines have side-effects for my body?

Similar to medications and other vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccines can cause side effects. The most common side effects include soreness at the injection site on your arm, a bit of tiredness, chills and/or a mild headache as the vaccine starts to work. Common side effects are usually mild and resolved within a few days after vaccination. These types of side effects are expected and simply indicate the vaccine is working to protect you by building your immunity.

As with any medicines and vaccines, allergic reactions are rare but can occur after receiving a vaccine. Most serious reactions will occur shortly after injection, and clinic staff are prepared to help you if you have an allergic reaction should it occur. This is why you are asked to wait at the clinic for 15 to 30 minutes after getting the vaccine.

Serious side effects after receiving the vaccine are rare. If you develop any serious symptoms or symptoms that could be an allergic reaction, seek medical attention right away.

Can I get the vaccines if I have allergies?

Depending on your allergies, you may need to speak with your primary care provider before getting the vaccine. You should not get the vaccine if you have ever had an allergic reaction to any vaccine ingredients. A full list of ingredients can be found online on the Government of Canada website. If you have had severe allergic reactions and/or anaphylaxis to other vaccines, injectable medicines or allergens you can receive the vaccine after speaking with your primary care provider and may need to stay longer to be observed by health care staff to ensure you are safe if you do have a reaction.

Adapted with permission from COVID-19 vaccine communications and educational resources created by the Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle and Mamaway Witikokdaadwin Indigenous Interprofessional Primary Care Team.
Peel Public Health
COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions
Mind: learning about the vaccines

Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine?
All Indigenous adults age 16 and older are part of the Phase 1 Vaccine Roll-out. Adult household members aged 16 and older (non-Indigenous) are eligible to get the vaccine.

In Region of Peel, Indigenous adults 18 or older and non-Indigenous household members can get the vaccine.

Indigenous community members can also schedule a shortened second dose by contacting the clinic from which they received their first dose. Visit peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment/.

How do the COVID-19 vaccines work?
The vaccines will train the immune system to recognize COVID-19 and respond quickly if you are ever exposed to the actual COVID-19 virus. The COVID-19 vaccines are given by an injection into the muscle of the arm. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. For more, visit peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine.

Where can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?
As more vaccine arrives, more clinics will open. In Peel, there are many clinic options based on eligibility criteria. Book your appointment: peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment.

Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?
A vaccine is the only foreseeable way to end the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic will not end until the majority of people are vaccinated.

While the vaccine will protect each of us individually, the biggest goal of a vaccine program is to immunize most of the population so that COVID-19 can no longer spread. The percentage of people that
need to be vaccinated depends on how infectious the disease is and how effective the vaccine is at preventing spread of the disease. The sooner a majority of people are vaccinated, the sooner our lives can return to normal.

**Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?**

Yes. Only vaccines that are approved by Health Canada and are deemed safe will be available in Ontario. Health Canada rigorously reviews all new vaccines before approving them for use.

**What was the approval process for the vaccine?**

Canada’s best independent scientists thoroughly reviewed all the data before approving the vaccines as safe and effective for Canadians. All safety steps were followed in approving these vaccines. The development of the COVID-19 vaccines progressed quickly for several reasons including: reduced time delays in the vaccine approval process, quick adaptation of existing research programs, international collaboration among scientists and governments, increased dedicated funding and quick recruitment of clinical trial participants.

**Should I be worried about a vaccine that was developed so quickly?**

No. Only vaccines that Health Canada has approved and determined are safe and effective can be administered in Canada. These vaccines were developed faster than before because of the never-before seen levels of collaboration and funding invested in this effort around the world.

**Is the COVID-19 Vaccine the same as the flu vaccine?**

The COVID-19 Vaccine and the Flu Vaccine are very different and you can’t directly compare them to each other. They each target a different virus. Flu vaccines are for the influenza virus, and the COVID-19 vaccine is for virus that causes COVID-19.

Adapted with permission from COVID-19 vaccine communications and educational resources created by the Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle and Mamaway Widokdaadwin Indigenous Interprofessional Primary Care Team.
Make an informed choice about COVID-19 vaccines and take care of your mind, body, emotions, spirit and community.

Peel Public Health
COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions
Community: Protecting your loved ones

When can my kids get the vaccine?
So far, a vaccine has not been approved for children. The bodies and immune systems of kids have different needs than the bodies of adults and we want to make sure the vaccines are safe for children too. Research is underway to determine when those under the authorized ages can receive the vaccine.

What if I’m pregnant or trying to get pregnant?
People who are pregnant are eligible for the vaccine because they are considered to have highest risk health conditions by the province. Pregnant individuals, along with one of their caregivers, can receive the vaccine. People who are planning to get pregnant or are pregnant should talk to their health care provider before seeking vaccination.

What if I’m breastfeeding?
There is currently no available evidence on the effects of vaccination for breastfeeding individuals or the effects of vaccines on breastfed infants or milk production. However, based on how these vaccines work in the body, COVID-19 vaccines are thought not to be a risk to lactating people or their breastfeeding babies.

Why is there so much focus on seniors getting the vaccine?
Seniors living in long-term care settings are at an increased risk for getting COVID-19 because they live in close together sharing the same indoor air. Seniors’ immune systems can have a harder time fighting the virus and protecting them from getting sick; especially if they are living with a pre-existing condition.

However, with variants in the community, COVID-19 is affecting younger people as well. Regardless of age, it’s important to protect yourself with vaccination as soon as it’s available to you.
Do I still have to wear a mask and socially distance after getting the vaccine?

Even with COVID-19 vaccines, it will still be important to follow all public health guidelines to help limit the spread of the virus. This is because there is still a chance that people who have had the vaccine can still get COVID-19, although if they do they will have milder symptoms. This is why it is important to continue to wear masks, physically distance, and practice proper hand washing even after getting the vaccine.

Doing all of these things, along with protecting yourself with a vaccine, helps to protect you and your loved ones until enough of the population can be vaccinated.
Make an informed choice about COVID-19 vaccines and take care of your mind, body, emotions, spirit and community.

TRUTH:

Know the facts behind COVID-19 vaccines and how to find helpful information to make decisions.

Peel Public Health
COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions
Truth: Knowing the facts about vaccines

Myth: We can’t trust COVID-19 vaccines because they were rushed.
Truth: The first vaccines for COVID-19 do involve new technology, and they were developed in record time. But it is not because they were shortcuts in the process.

Myth: We don’t know what’s in these vaccines.
Truth: The ingredients of all vaccines are reviewed and posted by Health Canada. The only ingredients in vaccines are ones that are needed so they can work properly and help you build immunity. Learn more about the authorized vaccines and their ingredients: peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/about.

Myth: I already had COVID-19, so I don’t need the vaccine.
Truth: We do not yet know how long natural immunity to COVID-19 lasts. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine will help ensure that you are immune to COVID-19 until we know more.

Myth: These vaccines will alter my DNA.
Truth: The purpose of any vaccine is to mimic the infection, to get the body to build immunity to the virus but not cause the illness. The COVID-19 vaccine does not alter your DNA. It will train the immune system to recognize COVID-19 and respond quickly if you are ever exposed to the actual COVID-19 virus.

Myth: Since COVID-19’s survival rate is so high, I don’t need a vaccine.
Truth: It’s true that most people who get COVID-19 are able to recover. But it’s also true that some people develop long-lasting symptoms. Getting the vaccine protects you from getting COVID-19 and when many people get the vaccine it will help to stop the spread of the virus and protect everyone in the community including people who cannot get the vaccine (e.g. children) and those who could become severely ill.

Myth: Indigenous Peoples were identified as a priority group and selected to be one of the first to receive the vaccine because they are the ‘Guinea pigs’ or ‘test subjects’.
Truth: The social determinants of health put Indigenous Peoples at higher risk for COVID-19 and negative effects. The vaccines are being made available to Indigenous Peoples in response to the different needs of the population and to help protect our communities so we can all stay safe.
How can I carefully choose information about COVID-19 and COVID-19 Vaccines?

Choosing reliable and safe information about COVID-19 and about vaccines is important for keeping yourself and your loved ones safe. There is a large amount of information available and sometimes it can be confusing to know what information is helpful and what information is harmful. Try using these steps to choose helpful health information for you.

**Look at who is giving the information:**
- Is the information from a credible source that is an expert in the area (e.g. your healthcare provider, public health unit)?
- Is the information source trustworthy? Do they have anything to gain from giving you incorrect information?

**Look at how old the information is:**
- COVID-19 information changes quickly – is the information you’re reading older than a few months?
- Does the information you are reading provide a date of when it was updated?

**Look at the accuracy of the information:**
- Does the information come with sources that you can follow-up with to understand where the information came from?
- Does the language seem biased to you? Does the language use scare tactics or fear to influence your decision?

**Look at the purpose of the information:**
- Is the information fact, someone’s opinion, or propaganda?
- Does the information appear impartial or objective? Does the information seem like it’s driven by the poster’s emotions?

When in doubt, talk to a trusted person at your local Indigenous service information or a healthcare provider for more information. You are encouraged to ask questions about the vaccines, the risks, and the benefits so you can make the decision that’s right for you.

Adapted with permission from COVID-19 vaccine communications and educational resources created by the Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle and Mamaway Wildokdaadwin Indigenous Interprofessional Primary Care Team.
Is there harmony between the two ways of medicine?

Wellness and healing happens when we can find harmony and balance in our relationships. Using westernized medicine (like vaccines) along with traditional and cultural healing is a helpful way to keep our communities protected from COVID-19 and keep our minds, bodies, spirits, and emotions balanced and healthy.

What are some ways to take care of my Spirit while deciding what is best for me?

Talking to your family, your nookmis and mishoomis, and other Elders in your community about your decisions.

Staying active and staying connected, using smudge, and using the medicines are also helpful. Ask your local Indigenous service organization how to access the medicines.

Who can I talk to for support during this pandemic and to learn about the vaccine?

Contact your service organization for support during the pandemic and with making decisions about COVID-19 vaccines.
Contact the following service organization for support during the pandemic and with making decisions about COVID-19 vaccines.

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