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November 9, 2021

# PHAC WEBINAR SHORTS: Contraindications to COVID-19 vaccines

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PROTECTING AND EMPOWERING CANADIANS  
TO IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH



# Objectives

At the end of this webinar, you will be able to:

- Identify **contraindications and precautions to authorized COVID-19 vaccines** as defined by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

# Reference material

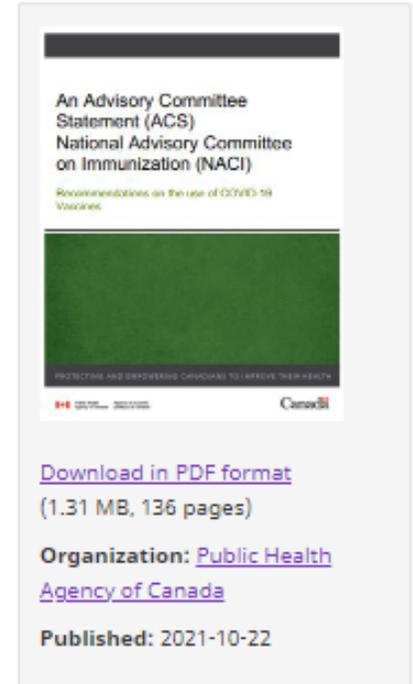
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html>

## Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines

Publication date: October 22, 2021

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**Organization:** [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

**Published:** 2021-10-22

# Considerations



- COVID-19 vaccine contraindications are **specific to the vaccine product.**
- When a vaccine product is contraindicated, typically another vaccine type can be offered.
- Canada’s vaccine supply favors mRNA vaccines over viral vector vaccines.
  - Vaccine availability may impact the ability to offer an alternate vaccine.
- Vaccine documentation requirements (e.g. mandates or “passports”) are led by certain provinces, territories and employers.
  - What qualifies individuals for an exemption **may vary by jurisdiction.**

# Precautions requiring COVID-19 Vaccines to be deferred

- For individuals who experienced **myocarditis following vaccination** with an mRNA vaccine:
  - subsequent doses of mRNA vaccine should be **deferred** until more information is available about their safety.
- People receiving **treatment using monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma**:
  - should not receive any COVID-19 vaccine simultaneously with treatment.
- Those with **COVID-19 or other acute illness**:
  - should defer vaccination until symptoms resolve.

# Severe allergic reactions to vaccine ingredients are no longer considered an absolute contraindication to COVID-19 vaccination

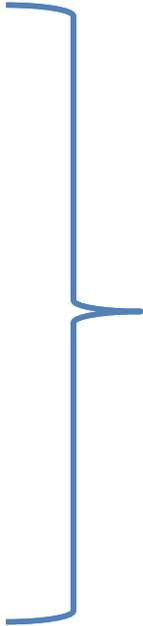
Some vaccine components in COVID-19 vaccines have been identified as potential allergens.

Vaccine / packaging contents	Vaccine
Polyethylene glycol (PEG)	mRNA vaccines
Tromethamine	Moderna Spikevax vaccine
Polysorbate 80	Viral vector vaccines
Ingredients in the packaging of COVID-19 vaccines	

- Assessment by an allergist or other healthcare provider may allow for individuals with severe allergies to COVID-19 vaccines or their components to be safely vaccinated or revaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines.

## More COVID-19 vaccine precautions related to allergies:

- ✓ People with **previous mild to moderate allergic reactions to COVID-19 vaccines\***
- ✓ People with **suspected but unproven allergies to a COVID-19 vaccine ingredient (e.g. PEG)**
- ✓ People with **severe allergies to injectable therapies such as other vaccines**



Can be vaccinated and **observed for at least 30 minutes** following vaccination

No precautions are needed for people with food, environmental or other drug allergies

\*Consultation with an allergist may be warranted

# COVID-19 Vaccine Contraindications to Viral Vector Vaccines

People with a history of:

- **Vaccine Induced Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia (VITT)** should not be given viral vector vaccines.
- **Capillary leak syndrome** should not be given viral vector vaccines.

## Scenario 1

Alex is 22 and is looking to get an exemption to his provincial COVID-19 vaccine passport.

- He has a **history of myocarditis associated with viral illness** (6 years ago) from which he has fully and uneventfully recovered from, and is no longer being followed clinically for cardiac issues.
- He believes he shouldn't get the vaccine due to the risk of myocarditis associated with mRNA vaccines.

**Is the vaccine contraindicated for Alex?**



## Scenario 1: Answer

**No, a vaccine is not contraindicated for Alex**



- Only people who have had myocarditis with their first dose of an mRNA should wait to receive a second until more information about its safety is available.
- Previous myocarditis that is not associated with the vaccine is not a contraindication to vaccination.

## Scenario 2

- Alice has **rheumatoid arthritis**
- She's avoided getting the vaccine because she's concerned that stimulating her immune system will flare her autoimmune disease
- Her province has a vaccine passport and she needs one to continue with her exercise classes

**Is the vaccine contraindicated for Alice?**



## Scenario 2: Answer

**No, a vaccine is not contraindicated for Alice**



- Autoimmune disease is not a contraindication for COVID-19 vaccines
- Provide Alice with the best available information on the impact of vaccination on people with autoimmune disease and review the risks that COVID-19 poses to her

## Scenario 3



- Marguerite had dose 1 of an mRNA vaccine
- 20 minutes following the vaccine she began to experience **difficulty breathing and swelling of the face and mouth**
- Epinephrine was administered and Marguerite was transported to the hospital for anaphylaxis management

**Is the COVID-19 vaccine contraindicated for Marguerite?**

## Scenario 3: Answer

No, anaphylaxis is not an absolute contraindication to revaccination for Marguerite



- People with a history of severe immediate reactions to mRNA vaccines **can be safely revaccinated**
- NACI recommends weighing the risks and benefits of vaccination with Marguerite, including her current level of protection and risk of COVID-19, and provide her with informed consent before proceeding
- Referral to an allergist or other appropriate physician should be made prior to revaccination
- If revaccinated, vaccine administration should be done in a controlled setting with expertise and equipment to manage anaphylaxis
- Marguerite should be observed for **at least** 30 minutes after revaccination, possibly longer if she begins to demonstrate any symptoms of an adverse reaction

## Scenario 4

Anup has not been vaccinated against COVID-19. He is seeking a physician exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine to meet requirements at his place of work.

- He once had a **reaction to the laxative Miralax™** causing sudden onset of abdominal pain.
- Miralax contains PEG (as do mRNA vaccines).
- He does not know for sure if this was an allergic reaction or something else.
- He was told he cannot be vaccinated in case he has an allergy to polyethylene glycol.

**Are COVID-19 vaccines contraindicated for Anup?**



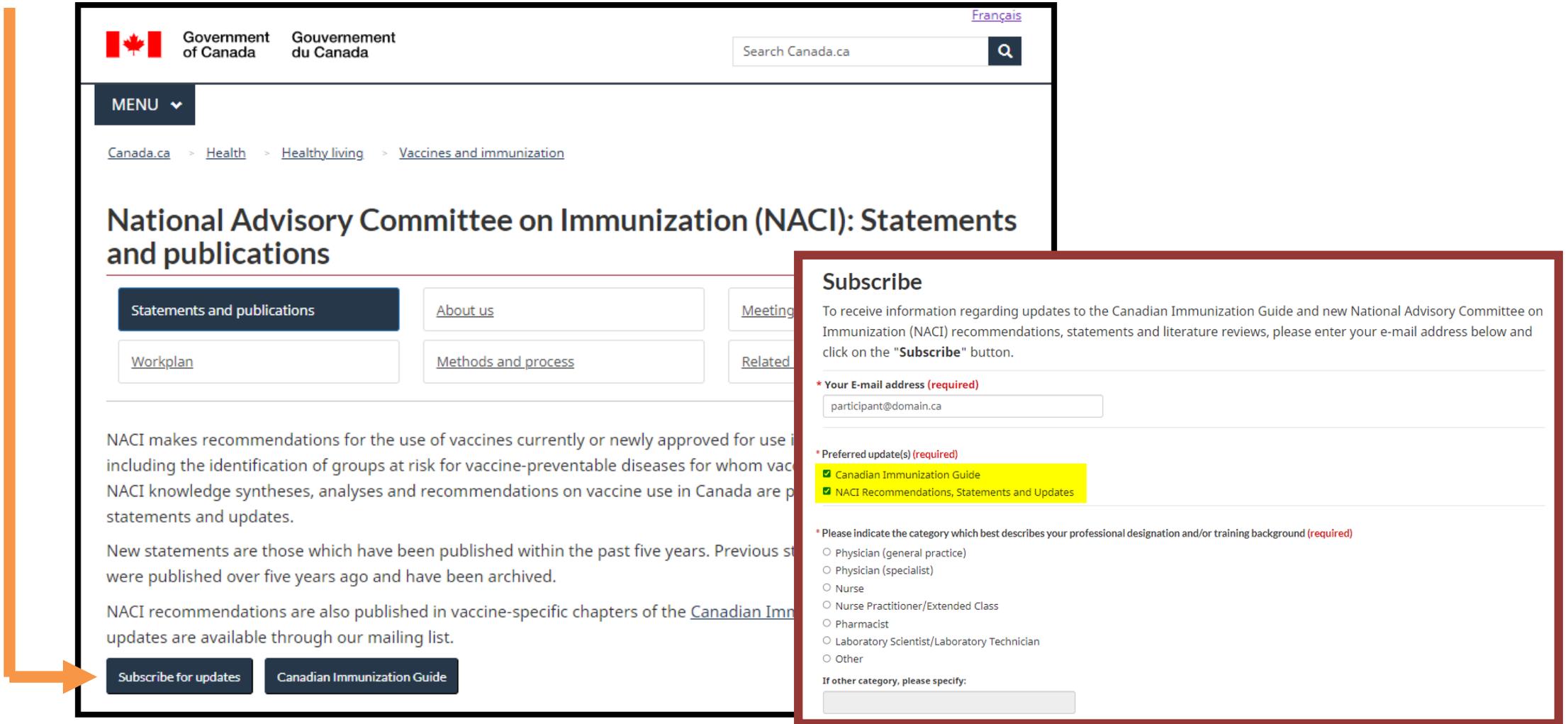
## Scenario 4: Answer

**No, a vaccine is not contraindicated for Anup**



- Anup does not have a confirmed allergy to a vaccine component.
- Even for individuals with a confirmed immediate allergy to a vaccine component, vaccination is still possible after consulting with an allergist.
- Discuss with Anup the risk of vaccination and its benefits, his options for allergy testing, and the opportunity to voice his concerns so that he can provide informed consent.

# Subscribe for NACI publications and updates to the Canadian Immunization Guide



The image shows a screenshot of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) website. The page title is "National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): Statements and publications". Below the title, there are several navigation buttons: "Statements and publications" (highlighted in dark blue), "About us", "Meeting", "Workplan", "Methods and process", and "Related". The main content area contains text about NACI's role in recommending vaccines and providing updates. At the bottom of the main content, there are two buttons: "Subscribe for updates" and "Canadian Immunization Guide". An orange arrow points from the left side of the page to the "Subscribe for updates" button. A dark red overlay box on the right side of the page contains a "Subscribe" form. The form includes a text input field for an email address (with "participant@domain.ca" entered), a section for "Preferred update(s)" with two checked options: "Canadian Immunization Guide" and "NACI Recommendations, Statements and Updates", and a section for "Please indicate the category which best describes your professional designation and/or training background" with several radio button options: "Physician (general practice)", "Physician (specialist)", "Nurse", "Nurse Practitioner/Extended Class", "Pharmacist", "Laboratory Scientist/Laboratory Technician", and "Other". There is also a text input field for "If other category, please specify:".

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## National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): Statements and publications

Statements and publications

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NACI makes recommendations for the use of vaccines currently or newly approved for use including the identification of groups at risk for vaccine-preventable diseases for whom vaccines are recommended. NACI knowledge syntheses, analyses and recommendations on vaccine use in Canada are published as statements and updates.

New statements are those which have been published within the past five years. Previous statements were published over five years ago and have been archived.

NACI recommendations are also published in vaccine-specific chapters of the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#). Updates are available through our mailing list.

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci.html>

# PHAC Health Care Provider Toolkit:



### Contents

- **About COVID-19:** General information including symptoms, prevention and guidance for health care providers, culturally safe care, and statements from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada
- **Overview of Vaccines:** COVID-19 vaccines in Canada, how to get vaccinated, national vaccination coverage, shipments and deliveries, how vaccines are developed, as well as information for Indigenous Peoples
- **Authorized Vaccines:** Information about COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized by Health Canada
- **Guidance for Health Care Providers:** Planning guidance on vaccine administration and immunization clinics, NACI recommendations, and guidance on anaphylaxis, vaccine components and pain mitigation
- **Vaccine Confidence:** Information and training on addressing vaccine confidence, and answers to common questions
- **Vaccine Safety:** Overview of vaccine safety, surveillance and reporting, information on possible side effects, and reported side effects in Canada
- **Additional Resources:** Provincial, territorial and stakeholder resources, communications and digital tools, and content and resources for social media platforms
- **Terms of Use:** Information about the Canada wordmark and how the tool kit resources can be used

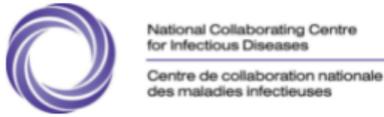
<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/diseases-maladies/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/covid-19-healthcare-professionals-vaccine-toolkit.pdf>

## To view previous PHAC webinars, visit:



COVID-19 for health professionals: Training

[www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/training.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/training.html)



National Collaborating Centre for Infectious diseases

[nccid.ca/phac-webinars-on-covid-19-vaccines](http://nccid.ca/phac-webinars-on-covid-19-vaccines)



Canadian Vaccination Evidence Resource and Exchange Centre

<https://canvax.ca/canvax-presents-phac-webinar-series-covid-19-vaccines>

### **Webinar Topics include:**

- COVID-19 vaccines foundations
- Delayed injection site reactions
- Revaccination following anaphylaxis
- Other recommendations from NACI on the use of COVID-19 vaccines
- Vaccine hesitancy