

AstraZeneca/ COVISHIELD Vaccine:

Basic Information

This guidance provides basic information only. This document is not intended to provide or take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment or legal advice.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus disease 2019 that is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Anyone can be infected with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). However, some populations are at increased risk of exposure to the virus (e.g., due to living or work settings), and some populations are at increased risk of severe disease and death due to biological (e.g., advanced age, pre-existing medical conditions) and social (e.g., socioeconomic status, belonging to a racialized population) factors.

The Vaccine

AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine/COVISHIELD vaccine (ChAdOx1-S [recombinant])	
Authorized ages for use	Authorized for 18 years of age and older. The safety and efficacy in children under 18 years of age has not yet been established.

Schedule	2 doses	
	Minimum Interval	28 days
	Authorized Interval	4 to 12 weeks

	Recommended Interval	4 months to increase the number of individuals benefiting from the first dose of vaccinated at 4-12 weeks.
--	----------------------	--

Booster doses	At present, no evidence for additional boosters after the 2-dose series
----------------------	---

Contraindications

- Contraindicated in individuals who have experienced major venous and/or arterial thrombosis with thrombocytopenia following vaccination with any vaccine.
- Contraindicated in individuals who have experienced a previous cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) with thrombocytopenia or who have experienced heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT). Individuals who think they have experienced a previous CVST with thrombocytopenia or heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT) should not receive the vaccine.

Warnings & Precautions

Anyone receiving the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine/COVISHIELD vaccine should be informed of the risk of Vaccine-Induced Immune Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia (VITT) and advised to seek immediate medical attention if they develop symptoms of VITT.

Precautions During Vaccination Should Be Taken For:

- Individuals who fainted or became dizzy after receiving a vaccine or medical procedure, or those with high levels of fear about injections. These individuals can receive the vaccine. To reduce injuries due to fainting, people should be immunized while seated, or if considered at high-risk, while lying down. These individuals are also advised they may bring a support person.
- Individuals who have a bleeding disorder, bruise easily or are taking blood thinners

can safely receive the vaccine. In individuals with bleeding disorders, the condition should be optimally managed prior to immunization to minimize the risk of bleeding.

Who Should Delay Receiving the Vaccine:

- Vaccination should be deferred in symptomatic individuals with confirmed or suspected SARS-CoV-2 infection, those with an acute illness, or those with symptoms of COVID-19 in order to avoid attributing any complications resulting from infection with SARS-CoV-2, or other illnesses, to vaccine related adverse events and to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission at an immunization clinic. It would be prudent to wait for all symptoms of an acute illness to completely resolve before receiving the vaccine.
- Individuals who have been advised to self-isolate due to suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection or due to close contact with a COVID-19 positive case should not attend a vaccine clinic and should wait to get their vaccine until their isolation period is over.
- Individuals who have received another vaccine within the past 14 days.
- Individuals who intend to receive a vaccine within 4 weeks of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Considerations for Other Patient Groups

- The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine/COVISHIELD vaccine can safely be given to persons with a history of prior SARS-CoV-2 infection. Vaccination should be offered to persons regardless of history of prior symptomatic or asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection.
- Having prolonged COVID-19 symptoms (sometimes called Long COVID or Post-Acute COVID-19 Syndrome) is not a contraindication to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. However the vaccine may be delayed to avoid incorrect attribution of any change in the person's underlying condition to the vaccine. Common side effects

of the vaccine (e.g., fatigue, myalgia, arthralgia) may be similar to ongoing prolonged COVID-19 symptoms.

Recommendations for Specific Populations

1. Pregnancy

Recommendation:

All pregnant individuals in the authorized age group are eligible and recommended to be vaccinated as soon as possible, at any stage in pregnancy, as COVID-19 infection during pregnancy can be severe, and the benefits of vaccination outweigh the risks. Vaccination may be considered at any gestational age, including the first trimester.

2. Breastfeeding

Recommendation:

COVID-19 vaccines can also be safely given to breastfeeding individuals and recent data shows that mRNA from vaccines do not transfer into breast milk. Anti-COVID-19 antibodies produced by the breastfeeding person have been shown to transfer through the milk and provide protection to the infant. The vaccines are safe for the breastfeeding person, and should be offered to those eligible for vaccination.

3. Autoimmune Conditions & Immunocompromised persons (due to disease or treatment)

Recommendation:

Since Covishield is not a live vaccine, it is considered safe in this group.

4. Allergies

Recommendation

- Individuals who have had a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or to any of its components should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine in a general vaccine clinic.

Individuals who have had an allergic reaction within 4 hours and/or anaphylaxis that occurred with a vaccine or injectable medication that does not contain a component

or cross-reacting component of the COVID-19 vaccines can receive the COVID-19 vaccine followed by observation for a minimum of 30 minutes.

- Individuals with a history of significant allergic reactions and/or anaphylaxis to any food, drug, venom, latex or other allergens not related to the COVID 19 vaccine can receive the COVID-19 vaccine followed by observation for a minimum of 15 minutes. Individuals with allergy issues like allergic rhinitis, asthma and eczema can receive the vaccine followed by observation for a minimum of 15 minutes.

Side Effects

The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine/COVISHIELD vaccine, like medicines and other vaccines can cause side effects. In clinical trials most of the side effects experienced were mild to moderate and on average did not last longer than three days.

Very common side effects	May affect more than 1 in 10 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain, tenderness, warmth at the injection site • Fatigue • Chills (common after second dose) • Headache • Muscle pain • Nausea (common after second dose) • Joint pain • Fever/ Feverishness
Common side effects	May affect 1 to less than 10 in 100 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localized redness, swelling, and pruritis • Induration Vomiting (uncommon after second dose)
Uncommon side effects	May affect up to 1 in 100 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlarged lymph nodes

Rare cases of serious thrombosis (blood clots) and thrombocytopenia (low platelets): Vaccine Induced Immune Thrombotic

Thrombocytopenia (VITT)

There have been very rare reports of serious blood clots (thrombosis), including cerebral sinus vein thrombosis (CSVT), associated with thrombocytopenia (low platelets). This phenomenon is named **Vaccine-Induced Immune Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia (VITT)**

- **Symptoms to be vigilant for include:** persistent and severe headache, seizures, or focal neurological symptoms including blurred or double vision (suggesting CSVT or arterial stroke); shortness of breath, chest, back, or abdominal pain (suggesting pulmonary embolism, acute coronary syndrome, abdominal vein thrombosis, or adrenal hemorrhage); unusual bleeding, bruising, petechiae, or blood blisters (suggesting thrombocytopenia or disseminated intravascular coagulation); or limb swelling, redness, pallor, or coldness (suggesting deep vein thrombosis or acute limb ischemia)

Adverse Events Following Immunization

Those administering vaccines should ensure that the vaccine recipients or their parents/guardians are advised to notify clinic staff, or if they have left the clinic, call their doctor/nurse practitioner or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if they develop any of the following:

- Hives
- Swelling of the mouth and throat
- Trouble breathing, hoarseness or wheezing
- High fever (over 40°C or 104°F)
- Convulsions (seizures)

Health care providers administering vaccines are required to inform vaccine recipients of the importance of immediately reporting adverse events following immunization to a physician or nurse

Source: <https://www.health.gov.on.ca> › pro › docs › vaccine