

Heart inflammation and COVID-19 mRNA vaccines

Very rare cases of myocarditis and pericarditis have been reported in people who have received a COVID-19 mRNA vaccination.

What are myocarditis and pericarditis?

- Myocarditis is inflammation of the heart muscle.
- Pericarditis is swelling and irritation of the thin tissue surrounding your heart.

The available information suggests these very rare conditions are more frequently reported:

- in teenagers and young adults;
- in males than in females; and
- following the second dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine.

Most people experience **mild** illness, respond well to treatment and rest, and **fully recover**.

Symptoms

Symptoms usually start within **one week** of vaccination. They include:

- chest pain;
- shortness of breath; and
- feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart

If you or your child experience any of these symptoms within one week of vaccination, seek medical care immediately and report that you had a COVID-19 vaccine.

It is more common to get myocarditis and pericarditis from a COVID-19 infection, than it is to get it from vaccination. The benefits of immunization far outweigh the known and potential risks of COVID-19 infection.

How common are myocarditis and pericarditis?

Myocarditis and pericarditis are rare. However, current Canadian vaccine safety data indicate higher reported cases following COVID-19 vaccination with an mRNA vaccine, than would normally be expected in younger people.

- In the Yukon, as of November 4, 2021, the reported rate of myocarditis and/or pericarditis is 0.002%* of all COVID-19 mRNA vaccine administered.

Should I still get vaccinated?

Yes. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) continues to recommend vaccination with mRNA COVID-19 vaccines because the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines far outweigh their potential risks. The risk of developing myocarditis and pericarditis is much greater following COVID-19 infection than vaccination.

What if I have a history of cardiac complications?

People with cardiovascular risk factors, such as heart disease and high blood pressure, have a higher risk of complications if they get infected with COVID-19. The risk of complications from COVID-19 infection is much higher than the rare risk of myocarditis or pericarditis from the vaccine; therefore, vaccination is recommended. If you have a complex history of cardiac conditions, consult your health care practitioner to discuss the COVID-19 vaccination.

* Information based on cases of myocarditis reported to the Canadian Adverse Event Immunization Surveillance System (CAEFIS).