

## Share Answers About mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

Patients will turn to you for **evolving COVID-19 vaccine details**.

Share facts...and help dispel misconceptions.

The mRNA vaccines, from Pfizer-BioNTech (BNT162b2) and Moderna (mRNA-1273), give our cells an mRNA blueprint to make a piece of the SARS-CoV-2 "spike" protein. This triggers an immune response.

The mRNA is then quickly broken down. It doesn't affect our DNA.

Educate that these aren't live vaccines...they don't use whole or partial pathogens...and they can't cause COVID-19 infection.

Vaccines using an "mRNA platform" have been studied for over a decade. And COVID-19 vaccine trials are large, similar to other vaccines.

Clarify why these vaccines became available quickly. Some steps occurred simultaneously...but none were skipped. For instance, manufacturing began while waiting for trial results.

Address efficacy questions. Early data suggest the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine has roughly 95% efficacy against COVID-19 after 2 IM doses of the same product...separated by 21 or 28 days.

For example, Pfizer-BioNTech data over about 2 months show 162 symptomatic, confirmed COVID-19 cases in the placebo group versus 8 in the vaccinated group...in more than 43,000 people age 16 and up.

Point out that with broader use, we'll learn more about real-world effectiveness...such as how long immunity lasts.

And stay tuned for data about whether vaccinated patients can still develop asymptomatic COVID-19 and spread the virus. For now, continue to emphasize wearing masks, distancing, etc...even AFTER vaccination.

Tell patients to expect injection site pain...and flu-like symptoms (fatigue, aches, etc), which seem more likely after the second dose.

Explain these should go away in a couple days...and can be signs the immune system is working. Counsel similarly to how you do for Shingrix.

Be aware, a Health Canada interim order for COVID-19 vaccines expedites access...but safety and efficacy data are still required in line with what's needed for eventual approval.

Address hesitancy with our chart, *Communicating About COVID-19 Vaccination*. Get our *COVID-19 Vaccines* chart for storage, doses, etc.

### Key References:

-N Engl J Med Published online Dec 10, 2020; doi:10.1056/NEJMoa2034577

-N Engl J Med 2020;383(20):1920-31

-[www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/interim-order-import-sale-advertising-drugs/guidance.html#a212](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/interim-order-import-sale-advertising-drugs/guidance.html#a212) (12-22-20)

Pharmacist's Letter Canada. January 2021, No. 370101

Cite this document as follows: Article, Share Answers About mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines, Pharmacist's Letter Canada, January 2021

The content of this article is provided for educational and informational purposes only, and is not a substitute for the advice, opinion or diagnosis of a trained medical professional. If your organization is interested in an enterprise subscription, email [sales@trchealthcare.com](mailto:sales@trchealthcare.com).

© 2021 Therapeutic Research Center (TRC). TRC and Pharmacist's Letter Canada and the associated logo(s) are trademarks of Therapeutic Research Center. All Rights Reserved. | 3120 W. March Lane, Stockton, CA, 95219 | (209) 472-2240