



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# COVID-19 Vaccine (Subunit)

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine [DSC]; Nuvaxovid COVID-19 Vaccine

## Brand Names: Canada

Nuvaxovid Omicron JN.1

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent COVID-19.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug (including polysorbate 80); or any other drugs, foods, or substances (including polyethylene glycol). Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have COVID-19, if you have any symptoms that could be from COVID-19, if you are waiting to find out COVID-19 test results, or if you recently had COVID-19.
- If you have an infection or an illness with a fever.
- If you have ever had certain heart problems (myocarditis, pericarditis).
- If you have ever had a health problem called multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS).
- If you have bleeding problems.

- If you are taking a blood thinner.
- If you have had a different COVID-19 vaccine.
- If you have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 within the past 14 days.
- If you have had a smallpox or mpox vaccine within the past 4 weeks.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- This vaccine cannot cause COVID-19.
- Be sure you know how many doses of COVID-19 vaccine you have had, how many you will need, and if you are able to get a booster dose. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.
- It is not known how long people who get this vaccine will be protected from COVID-19.
- Like all vaccines, this vaccine may not fully protect all people who get it. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- If you have side effects after a dose, acetaminophen or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen or naproxen may help.
- After getting the vaccine, continue to do things that prevent the spread of COVID-19 as recommended by local public health officials. These include washing hands often, wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from other people, and avoiding crowds.

- If you have a weak immune system or take drugs that weaken the immune system, talk with your doctor. This vaccine may not work as well. Some people may need to get a COVID-19 vaccine again.
- People who got this vaccine before or during a stem cell transplant or chimeric antigen receptor [CAR]-T therapy may need to get a COVID-19 vaccine again. If you have had or are having one of these treatments, talk with your doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Fast or slow heartbeat, shortness of breath, dizziness, passing out, severe upset stomach or throwing up, or stomach pain. These may be other signs of an allergic reaction or signs of another type of reaction.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Severe dizziness or passing out can happen after or sometimes before getting a vaccine. Tell your doctor right away if you feel dizzy.
- Some heart problems have very rarely happened. Most of the time, signs started within 10 days after getting the vaccine. Signs may include chest pain, shortness of breath, or feeling like your heart is beating fast, fluttering, or pounding. Call your doctor right away if you have any of these signs. If you have questions or concerns about this information, talk with your

doctor.

## What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Pain, redness, or swelling where the injection was given; headache; muscle or joint pain; fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher; chills; upset stomach or throwing up; swollen gland; or feeling tired or unwell. Most side effects have been mild to moderate.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

Report side effects to the FDA/CDC Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) at <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html> or by calling 1-800-822-7967. There is also a smartphone tool called V-safe that may be used to check how you are doing and to report side effects. This can be found at <https://vsafe.cdc.gov>. If you need help with V-safe, call 1-800-232-4636.

## How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- It is given as a shot into a muscle.
- You will be watched closely while you receive this drug and for some time after your dose. Talk with your doctor.

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do. For the most protection against COVID-19, it is important that you do not miss or skip doses.

## How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- This injection will be given to you in a health care setting. You will not store it at home.

## General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## Additional Information

Vaccine information fact sheets give information to properly inform the adult receiving the vaccine or, in the case of a minor, the child's parent or legal representative about the risks and benefits of each vaccine. Before vaccination, the provider is required to give a copy of the vaccine information fact sheet.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/current-vis/covid-19.html>

## Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms>.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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