



South Riverdale
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AstraZeneca COVID Vaccine - FAQ

Why did the Ontario government decide to pause use of the AstraZeneca vaccine?

The AstraZeneca vaccine is associated with a syndrome involving unusual blood clots and reduced platelets. This syndrome is called VITT (Vaccine-Induced Thrombotic Thombocytopenia)/VIPIT (Vaccine Induced Prothrombotic Immune Thrombocytopenia). It happens between 4 and 28 days after the vaccine and occurs in around [1 in every 50,000 injections](#). You can [read more about VITT here](#).

The Ontario government has made the decision to pause the use of AstraZeneca because of the small risk of VITT and because we will very soon have enough other vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) to vaccinate everyone in Ontario even without the AstraZeneca vaccine. Canada as a whole has not decided to pause the AstraZeneca COVID Vaccine (yet). Vaccine supply is also a factor being taken to account with Ontario's recent decision to pause and other provinces have been facing supply challenges.

I got the AstraZeneca vaccine. Did I make the wrong decision? Was I misled?

You made the right decision at the time, especially given the variants of concern! We are in a pandemic and what we know is constantly changing based on new research and data that is released.

VITT is rare, so it wasn't picked up in the early trials that included ~20,000 people. But now millions of people around the world have had the AstraZeneca vaccine. Global reporting systems picked up on this rare side effect.

At first, we thought it was happening in only 1 in a million doses. But on Friday, May 7th, the Ontario Science Table issued a new report that clarified that VITT is estimated to occur in 1 in 50,000 doses of AstraZeneca, which is a lot more common than we thought.

As healthcare professionals, we encouraged people to get the AstraZeneca vaccine last month because the benefits of preventing COVID-19 outweighed the risks of a serious reaction. However, now we know that the risks are higher than we thought they were.

Does VITT/VIPT occur with other vaccines?

VITT/VIPT seems to occur with both the AstraZeneca and the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which are both types of “viral vector vaccines”. It does not appear to happen with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which are mRNA vaccines.

Am I at risk of VITT (Vaccine-Induced Thrombotic Thombocytopenia)/VIPIT (Vaccine Induced Prothrombotic Immune Thrombocytopenia)?		
Received the AstraZeneca Vaccine more than 28 days ago.	NO	
Received a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.	NO	
Received the AstraZenca vaccine within the last 28 days.	<p>A very small chance</p> <p>Please note that after a vaccination, it is normal to feel tired, achy, feverish, have soreness at injection site, or a mild headache within the first 3 days. Those are not signs of VITT.</p>	<p>If you experience any have any of the following severe symptoms, call 911:</p> <p>Severe headache that does not go away, seizure, difficulty moving part of your body, new blurry vision or double vision that does not go away, difficulty speaking, shortness of breath, severe chest, back, or abdominal pain, unusual bleeding or bruising, new reddish or purplish spots, or blood blisters, new, severe swelling, pain, or colour change of an arm or a leg.</p> <p>If your symptoms are not severe, you can discuss them (virtually or in-person) with your doctor, nurse practitioner or nurse.</p>

What will happen with my second dose?

Right now we aren't sure. We will let you know as soon as we have this information. Our vaccine supply is provided by our government partners. We think there is a good chance you will be getting your second dose with an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) but decision-makers are waiting to get study results that will tell us whether that combination is safe and effective. The study results should hopefully be available in the next month.

If you received your first dose at South Riverdale Community Health Centre, we will contact you approximately 13 weeks after your first dose with next steps to confirm your second dose appointment.

- If you have not heard from us after 14 weeks from your first dose, please call our clinic at 416-461-2493, and specify that your 16 weeks for your second dose is coming up.
- If you booked your appointment through the provincial government booking system your second dose appointment was automatically scheduled.

I got the AstraZeneca shot and I am feeling really stressed and anxious. What can I do?

Remember that you made a good choice to protect yourself from COVID-19 and you are probably already getting some of that benefit! The risk of VITT is very, very small. Keep in mind that the UK has given the vaccine to millions of its residents and it is doing very well right now in terms of COVID-19.

If you're struggling with anxiety, check out this website from the Government of Canada that provides resources and also virtual counselling <https://wellnesstogether.ca>