



| COVID-19 | Boosters VS Travel Vaccines – what’s the difference?

Confused about COVID-19 booster shots versus travel shots? You’re not alone. Here’s a quick review of the differences between the two:

Travel vaccines are being offered exclusively for the purposes of making international travel easier. Some countries will only accept two doses of the same vaccine brand – check with your destination country to verify. You qualify for a travel dose if:

You received a mixed-series dose for your first two shots (ex. Moderna + Pfizer or AstraZeneca + Moderna).

You received two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

You must have received your second vaccine 28 days before seeking a travel vaccine.

Travel vaccines are provided for convenience purposes. If you are not planning to travel internationally, you are encouraged to wait until you become eligible for a booster shot.

COVID-19 booster vaccines are offered to individuals who are at higher-risk of contracting COVID-19, and whose protection from their first two doses is likely starting to diminish.

Booster doses are [limited to certain groups](#) in Saskatchewan at this time.

You must be either 28 days or six months past your second dose to qualify for a booster shot, depending on your eligibility. Whether your first two doses were the same, or different, doesn’t matter.

All Saskatchewan Health Authority clinics, as well as participating pharmacies, are capable of administering both travel vaccines and booster vaccines.

COVID-19

Do you need a booster ?

Shirley made sure she got her COVID-19 vaccine doses earlier this year and is now eligible for a booster. But why do some people need a booster?

Certain immunocompromised individuals and elderly people don't respond as well to the vaccines and are at greater risk of infection from COVID-19.

For them a third dose is given to increase the protection vaccination can provide.

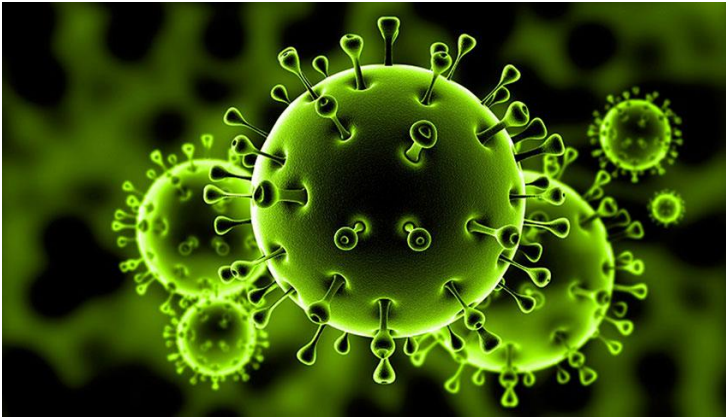
saskatchewan.ca/COVID19

| COVID-19 | Why do I still need a vaccine if I’ve already had COVID?

Health officials around the world are urging everyone – including those who have had COVID-19 – to be vaccinated against the virus. Why?



“Currently, the evidence is showing that the protection provided by a full COVID-19 vaccine series is stronger and longer than the protection from natural infection,” reported Dr. Satchan Takaya, Infectious Diseases Specialist and Medical Lead for Infection Prevention and Control for the Saskatchewan Health Authority.



What does that really mean? For most people with a healthy immune system, getting COVID-19 does protect a person from getting COVID-19 again for a short time.

“But compare this to immunization with a COVID-19 vaccine, which provides protection without getting a COVID-19 infection, avoiding the risk of hospitalization, long-COVID symptoms and death. And it provides a better and longer-lived immune response,” Dr. Takaya noted.

Long story short: getting vaccinated ensures you are protected well beyond what any natural immunity can do. You will be less likely to get COVID-19 again by getting immunized, even if you have recovered from COVID itself.

Some think serology testing – testing for COVID-19 antibodies in your blood – is a way to prove they are immune from COVID-19 after getting the virus.

However, positive antibody test results (through serology testing) can only show that you’ve either been exposed to COVID-19 OR vaccinated OR both. It cannot tell you if you are protected from COVID-19.

More information can be found on the [Government of Saskatchewan website](#).

/ COVID-19 / Countdown to the Holidays

It is less than six weeks until Christmas! If you are planning to gather, have the conversation about COVID-19 vaccination with your friends and family now. Encourage those eligible who haven't yet done so, to get vaccinated now to help keep everyone safer this holiday season. You are considered fully vaccinated only after two doses, 28 days apart, AND two weeks after the second dose (the whole process takes six weeks).

Transmissible diseases like COVID-19 are opportunistic: they will spread to and among under and unvaccinated populations. Increased transmission in the community will continue to result in higher breakthrough infections.

COVID-19

**Keep everyone safer
this holiday season...**

**Get vaccinated
BEFORE you gather.**





| COVID-19 | Faces of the Fight:

Personal Choices Affect Others

*By Dr. Marc Shekter, FIT for Active Living
(redeployed to Physical Medicine and
Rehabilitation)*

Over 10 months have passed since my first submission in the Faces of the Fight series was published. Since then so much has changed, and so much remains unchanged.

What has changed? I'm double vaccinated, as are my wife and teenage daughter. I am no longer fearful of COVID-19 like I once was. I

still have a healthy respect for the virus – I remain diligent about hand hygiene and I never stopped masking in indoor public spaces – but I am confident that if exposed to it my family and I will ultimately be okay.

What is unchanged? Our health-care system is stretched to the breaking point, and frontline health-care workers who have been the heroes of the pandemic from its outset are burned out. I can't believe we're in a fourth wave, worse than any of the previous three. It didn't have to be like this.

I have a complex mix of feelings – sadness, anger, resentment, puzzlement, incredulity – where the unvaccinated are concerned. I've heard all the reasons people choose not to get vaccinated, but the common thread always seems to come down to this: it's a personal choice and vaccination is not the right choice for me. Full stop.

Let me address that directly.

Yes, whether to accept a vaccine is a personal choice. But no, it's not full stop. Here's a story from my professional practice that I think about where vaccine hesitancy is concerned.

Several years ago, I was treating a patient a few months after his stroke. It was clear to me that he was impaired cognitively and behaviourally. I became alarmed when he told me he was still driving, and I informed him that I had a duty to forward his information to SGI's Medical Review Unit so that he might undergo formal evaluation regarding capacity to drive. He pleaded with me not to make this report. Our conversation unfolded as follows:

Me: It would be a terrible thing if one day I came into work and you weren't here because you made a driving error and crashed your car into a tree.

Patient: It's my personal choice to drive, and it's my responsibility if I'm in an accident.





Me: It would be even worse if you weren't here because you made a driving error and ran over a group of schoolchildren crossing the street.

Patient (hesitating): Yes, that would be bad, but I would never do something like that because I trust myself not to.

Me: Imagine the following scenario. Next door, right now, my colleague is having a conversation with his patient identical to the one you and I are having. And his patient pleads with him, as you're doing with me, not to report him to SGI. And my colleague thinks to himself "okay, this is too unpleasant and this patient is really convincing that he's on top of all this." So my colleague leaves well enough alone. And a week later, his patient makes a driving error and runs over your wife with his car. What do you think about that?

That did the trick. My patient dropped his objection to my reporting his information to SGI.

The personal choice to remain unvaccinated makes it more likely you'll get sick, infect others, and require medical care. So imagine the following scenario. Your spouse, or child, or parent, has an accident or becomes gravely ill with something other than COVID-19. And the person you love so much cannot access treatment because there are no more beds, and all the nurses and physicians are looking after COVID-19 patients. **Your personal choice affects others, because you are part of something bigger than yourself.**

Vaccines are a medical miracle, proven safe and effective, which can deliver us from this ongoing nightmare. If you care about more than just yourself, do the right thing and roll up your sleeve.

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