

## TALKING WITH LOCAL FAMILY PHYSICIAN DR. EMMA SMITH ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

Northumberland  
Family Health Team



**Meet Dr. Emma Smith:** I completed a degree in Biomedical Science at the University of Ottawa prior to completing Medical School at McMaster University then a residency in Family Medicine and fellowship in Low Risk Obstetrics at the University of Toronto. I currently practice family medicine at the Cobourg Medical Centre as part of the Northumberland Family Health Team (NFHT) and I provide inpatient and obstetric care at Northumberland Hills Hospital. Dr. Smith is the COVID-19 Vaccine Physician Lead for NFHT.

### ● Will you get a COVID-19 Vaccine?

**My answer is simple: YES!** I absolutely will be vaccinated. I WILL recommend my husband, parents, and siblings are vaccinated. I WILL recommend that all of my 1300 + family practice patients are vaccinated (unless they are not eligible). I don't think I will have to make a choice for my children, but if at some point Health Canada has data supporting the safety and effectiveness for kids, I WILL vaccinate them as well.

### ● Why do you feel getting vaccinated is important?

The virus is here in Northumberland. I have personally swabbed sick, COVID positive patients ranging in age from 15-months old to 78 years old. Anyone can get COVID-19, including me. Several colleagues I trained with in Toronto have. There is no cure. There can be severe short and long-term effects. If you have COVID-19, you can easily infect others before you feel sick or know that you have this disease. We have had nine deaths (at time of writing) in Northumberland County but looking to our western neighbours in Durham, the numbers are much worse. A doctor cannot write COVID-19 on a death certificate unless the patient has tested positive—the numbers and the threat are real.

### ● Why do you believe the Canadian-approved COVID-19 Vaccines are safe?

**I am confident that no corners were cut in the development of these vaccines where it comes to safety and quality.** The vaccines available in Canada were studied and approved more quickly than prior vaccines, but only because there was much more funding and many more willing research participants than usual. These COVID-19 vaccines were tested on many more volunteers than typically seen in vaccine trials. People all over the world volunteered. Also, Health Canada reviewed results as they were made available, instead of waiting until the trials were completed. The important point is, they *reviewed all of the data using the same measures of quality and safety*. Bureaucratic red tape was cut but corners were not.

**I have looked at that data myself.** Serious vaccine side-effects typically happen within six weeks. There is three months of data on tens of thousands of people getting these vaccines without having long-term or serious side-effects. I believe the COVID-19 vaccines are safe because the research and testing steps were done, the same (or better) as they are done for any other vaccine.

**I know, when I get vaccinated, I will have a sore arm.** That is a local reaction. I may also have an immune reaction like a headache, fever or muscle aches. This is good, it tells me that the vaccine has kick-started my immune system and is working. I tell people, I would literally take an injection in my eye if it was the only way to get this vaccine—that's how strongly I believe in this.

### ● Is there anyone who shouldn't get the vaccine?

At this time, the vaccine is approved for people 16 years of age and older, but this could change with more studies. People who have had a severe reaction to a vaccine, people with autoimmune conditions, immunodeficiency or who are immunosuppressed should speak with their doctor about the benefits, risks and best timing before getting vaccinated.



## ● Will the mRNA vaccine stay in my body? Change my DNA? Is it trackable?

**mRNA will not stay in my body. Once it has done its job, our cells break down and gets rid of the mRNA.**

When the vaccine is injected into your arm, your cells read the message the mRNA vaccine delivers and use it to build a COVID “spike protein” which triggers your body’s natural immune response. Once this message has been delivered, the mRNA disintegrates and is no longer active in your body. After vaccination, if and when you are exposed to COVID-19, your body will recognize the virus and has learned how to protect itself.

**There is no microchip in these vaccines.** mRNA is made up of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, and phosphate, which are the same molecules that make up all of our cells. **mRNA vaccines cannot give someone COVID-19** because they do not use live virus. **mRNA cannot alter your own DNA.** It cannot mutate your “genetic code”. It cannot enter the cell nucleus where that code is housed.

Trust your doctor, trust Public Health, trust the people who have spent their lives studying this stuff. Don’t believe pseudo-science. Don’t trust a Facebook expert. Do NOT get your information from people who have been doing Google research for the last 8 months.

### Isn’t Covid-19 just like the flu?

No, it’s not. COVID-19 is more contagious, spreads more quickly and more often causes severe illness or death than influenza. We have antiviral drugs, such as Tamiflu, for influenza—we do not have an antiviral drug that will kill the COVID-19 virus.

### Are Covid-19 vaccinations a scam for big Pharma and docs to make money?

This is not a scam. There is no payout from “Big Pharma” to doctors. Whether my patients choose to get a vaccination or not, it has NO impact on my income. I have never received a dollar, or trip, or gift because my patient takes a medication or vaccine, and I never will.

### How long will the vaccine protect me?

At this time, we don’t know. People in the initial vaccine trials are being followed for at least two years. This will give use more information as time goes on.

### What is the risk of an allergic reaction?

**No one has died from a COVID 19 vaccine.** Now that so many people have received it and three months have passed, there is less concern about an allergic reaction. Every dose in Canada is tracked and any bad reaction must be reported. Only people who have an allergy to one of the vaccine ingredients is at risk of an allergic reaction. See our website for a list of vaccine ingredients ([www.nfht.ca/covidvaccine](http://www.nfht.ca/covidvaccine)).

### What about pregnant women?

Being pregnant or breastfeeding does not mean you are automatically excluded from receiving the vaccine. We are constantly getting new information, so please check our website at [nfht.ca/covidvaccine](http://nfht.ca/covidvaccine) for updates. I also recommend [@pandemicpregnancyguide](https://www.instagram.com/pandemicpregnancyguide) on Instagram for reliable, pregnancy specific information. Most importantly, speak with your doctor or midwife about your personal risk.

## IF I GET THE VACCINE – COULD I STILL TRANSMIT THE VIRUS TO SOMEONE ELSE? DO I STILL HAVE TO WEAR A MASK?

Covid transmission risks after vaccination are still unknown, but we are learning more as time goes on. Until we know for sure, we still have to follow all safety guidelines, including social distancing, masking and hand-washing. **To me, if we can prevent illness, hospitalization, and death, it is worth it to wear a mask.**

MORE INFORMATION: [nfht.ca/covidvaccine](http://nfht.ca/covidvaccine)



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