



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Breakthrough Infections Q&A: What Does It Mean For Vaccines?

Q: WHAT IS A “BREAKTHROUGH INFECTION”?

A breakthrough infection is a term for becoming infected with COVID-19 despite being fully vaccinated (more than two weeks after the second dose) with the COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?

Since no vaccine is 100 per cent effective, doctors know some breakthrough infections will happen. Even if you do develop COVID-19, the vaccine still helps your body to be prepared to fight the virus.

Vaccinated people become less sick and are less likely to require hospitalization compared to those who remain unvaccinated or only partially vaccinated. This is the main purpose of vaccines – to prevent serious illness and reduce the spread of infection.

Q: WHY IS THE NUMBER OF BREAKTHROUGH INFECTIONS GOING UP?

When there is more virus circulating the chance that anybody gets infected goes up – including people who are fully vaccinated. As well, as the number of people who are fully vaccinated increases, the percentage number of infections found in vaccinated people will also go up.

Again, vaccinated people who do get sick are still much less likely to become seriously ill. They also fare much better at COVID-19 variants—such as the Omicron variant—than people who are unvaccinated or only partially vaccinated.

Q: WHY GET THE VACCINE IF I CAN STILL GET COVID-19?

You can get COVID-19 even if you are fully vaccinated, but it means you will be protected from serious illness. This is true even with COVID-19 variants. It is important to get ensure you get both doses and follow public health protocols.

The vaccines are working! They are saving lives, and so can you. Thank you for doing your part by getting vaccinated to protect yourself, your family and community.

Be sure to also book an appointment to get your booster shot when you become eligible for one.



Dr. Helena Swinkels, Office of the Chief Medical Officer