

## AstraZeneca COVISHield Clotting Risk and Effectiveness Information

We understand that you may have heard or read about the AstraZeneca (AZ) COVID vaccine and blood clots in the media recently as well as suggestions that this vaccine is not “as good as” others. We hope this information sheet helps answer some of questions and allows you to feel more comfortable about the safety and efficacy of this vaccine. Here is what we know at present:

### Blood Clots

You may have heard that this vaccine is associated with blood clots in the media, there is no evidence showing AZ vaccine causes an increase in blood clots overall. In the United Kingdom, there has been no increase in blood clots reported after over 11 million doses of the AZ vaccine. However the multiple countries have reported that the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine appears to be associated with very rare cases of serious blood clots, including blood clots in the brain. These blood clots have two important features: they occur 4 to 20 days after vaccination, and they are associated with low platelets (tiny blood cells that help form blood clots to stop bleeding). Doctors are calling this “Vaccine-induced Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia” (VITT). VITT seems to be rare, occurring in approximately 1.7 in every 100,000 people.

#### 1. Are certain people more likely to get VITT?

- VITT is very rare. **At this time, it is not clear if certain patients are more likely to get VITT. The cases so far have mostly been in younger women.**
- We do not think at present, that VITT is more common in people who have had blood clots before, people with a family history of blood clots, people with a low platelets, or pregnant women, because VITT does not develop through the same process as usual types of bleeding or clotting problems. That means that you can still safely get the AstraZeneca vaccine even if you fall into one of these categories.

#### 2. How common are these clots?

- Rates of VITT are around 0.0017% of those vaccinated
- The rate of getting a blood clot in the general public, without the vaccine is **0.002% per year.**
- Among people with COVID illness, **2%** of them developed a blood clot.
- Developing blood clots is common, especially in older people. Some people who receive a vaccine may at some point in the future develop a blood clot, for reasons that are not related to the vaccine.

#### 2. What are the recommendations of Canadian experts?

- Both Health Canada and Thrombosis Canada have said they continue to support the use and safety of this vaccine. They have both independently stated that there is no evidence the AZ vaccine causes blood clots.
- The COVID-19 vaccines are still strongly recommended for people who have had a previous blood clot and in people who are receiving blood thinning treatment.
- A lay summary of the Canadian science table report on VITT is available here: <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/vaccine-induced-prothrombotic-immune-thrombocytopenia-vipit-following-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccination-lay-summary/>

### **Effectiveness**

ALL of the approved vaccine in Canada are very good at protecting against severe disease (hospitalization and death). The rates for the AZ vaccine, after 2 doses, is 100%. This is the same as Moderna (100%) and Pfizer (75-100%).

We hope this is helpful to you but please do not hesitate to ask your primary care team or vaccination provider any other questions you have.