

RCD COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Committee

For Immediate Release

(Pembroke, Ontario, 11:30 a.m., June 14, 2021)

Fainting Post-Vaccination is Not Uncommon, Especially Among Youth

Vaccination teams at the COVID-19 clinics across Renfrew County and District (RCD) have seen a few instances of individuals feeling faint or fainting after vaccination in the region's younger populations. This has prompted Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) to share some tips to help prevent this common reaction in adolescents receiving vaccinations.

A vasovagal syncope episode (commonly known as fainting) is usually triggered by pain and/or anxiety and not by the vaccine itself, causing a sudden drop in the individual's heart rate and blood pressure. Fainting usually occurs during immunization or within minutes of immunization. The individual may complain of feeling faint or light-headed, then suddenly become pale, lose consciousness and collapse to the ground.

While fainting itself isn't considered serious, RCDHU wants to prevent injuries that could occur if someone were to fall.

"Fainting isn't a condition unique to the COVID-19 vaccine, but it is recognized as a reaction that can occur with any type of vaccination," said Dr. Robert Cushman, Acting Medical of Health for the RCDHU, adding that most patients who faint after vaccination generally recover within a few minutes.

"The main concern when these situations occur is the possibility of head injury from hitting the floor which is why our clinic teams do as much as they can to help prevent this from occurring and why it's important that people let the vaccinators know if they've ever had a similar experience with other vaccinations or if they feel strange in the moments post-vaccination," Dr. Cushman said.

Health care professionals who routinely administer vaccinations can help reduce the likelihood of fainting among those receiving the vaccine by taking a few precautionary actions such as:

- Giving patients a beverage, snack, or reassurance about the procedure.
- Having the person sit or lie down to prevent falls and injuries.
- Having the person breathe slowly and deeply before the procedure and encourage thinking of something relaxing.
- Utilizing distraction methods like asking the person questions or having a friendly conversation while doing the procedure.

It is recommended that parents or guardians inform the vaccinator of any previous fainting with vaccination. It can also be important for parents or guardians to ensure that children arrive for their vaccine well hydrated with a full stomach and that they assist in keeping children calm and relaxed during the vaccination appointment and watch for any signs of fainting in the minutes that follow.

People should contact their primary care provider if they have questions about their eligibility and/or personal health status before they receive the vaccine. Alternatively, those without a primary care provider can contact the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre (VTAC) (1-844-727-6404) to consult with a family physician.

For details specific to vaccination registration and appointments (i.e., what you need to bring), visit the [COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment Checklist](#).

For more information, visit RCDHU's website at <https://www.rcdhu.com/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-2/> or call 613-732-3629 or 1-800-267-1097.

- 30 -

Committee Spokesperson: Carolyn Levesque

Public Affairs and Communications Coordinator

Pembroke Regional Hospital

(613) 732-3675, extension 6165

Carolyn.levesque@prh.email

