



Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council COVID-19 Vaccine Study into Immune Response, Effectiveness, and Safety

Frequently Asked Questions

*This research project is community-driven and Nation-based;
therefore this document is subject to change.*

What is the COVID-19 Vaccine research project about?

The project came from Nuu-chah-nulth (NCN) Nations’ desire to document and understand the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine-related experiences, which was supported by the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) Board of Directors and got funded! This research aims to understand immune response to COVID-19 infection and/or vaccination, safety of the COVID-19 vaccine, and impacts of the pandemic on Nuu-chah-nulth communities.

Who is leading this project?

This project is community-driven, meaning that the NCN people, the leadership of each Nation, and NTC are creating this project together.

What are the proposed research activities and who can participate?

| Research Activity | Purpose | Who Will Be Invited to Participate? |
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| <i>Elder-led experience sharing</i> | Captures experiences about COVID-19 vaccine and pandemic from the view of an elder | All recognized Elders in the NCN First Nations and communities |
| <i>Family talking circles</i> | Captures experiences about COVID-19 vaccine and pandemic from the view of a family | Families that have heritage with NCN Nations |
| <i>Youth photovoice</i> | Captures experiences about COVID-19 vaccine and pandemic from the view of a youth | All youth aged 12-24 years old (to be determined by youth group in each Nation) |
| <i>Baseline Survey</i> | Captures information about vaccination status and side effects | Anyone aged 5 or older. |
| <i>Follow-up Survey</i> | Captures updated information about vaccination status and side effects | Anyone who receives COVID-19 vaccine (either primary series or booster) from NTC nurses during the study period |
| <i>Dried Blood Spot</i> | Measures antibody levels | Anyone aged 5 or older. |



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| <i>Venous Blood Sample</i> | Measures specific COVID-19 fighting antibody levels and identifies if you have recently been infected | Anyone aged 12 or older. |
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Why are blood samples being collected?

Through blood samples we will be able to identify how many antibodies your body has produced from recent infection and/or vaccination. In addition, venous blood samples will show how effective COVID-19 fighting antibodies are in fighting infection.

What happens to my blood sample after it is collected?

Blood samples will be transported to the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) in Winnipeg. Blood samples will be used only for the purpose of this research project. The leadership of NTC will work closely with each Nation and the Biospecimen Guardian to determine how the remaining blood samples will be handled after being analyzed; destroyed, stored, or returned to community.

What is a Biospecimen Guardian?

Being mindful of NCN communities' history of non-consensual and harmful medical research, the project has been designed with informed consent, data sovereignty, and respectful treatment of experiences and biological samples as priorities. A biospecimen guardian who is a NCN member will oversee the collection, transport, laboratory processing, and safe return to community of blood samples and testing results in a culturally appropriate way.

Can I participate in the project if I haven't been vaccinated?

Yes. For all activities, with exception of the follow-up questionnaire, the project is welcoming both unvaccinated and vaccinated participants (with any type and number of COVID-19 vaccine shots they received).

If I agree to share my experiences, what will be done with the information?

Each Nation and individual will be able to decide what is done with the information collected. Your information will be protected and used only for what you agree to participate in. If you change your mind and don't want your information stored, or analyzed, or used in the study, let us know! We will respect your decision.

Where and how will information collected be stored?

- All data collected for this project will be handled in accordance with NTC's data governance policies and the First Nation's principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP®).
- The data will be managed by NTC COVID-19 Research Team during the study period and will be held for five years after completion of the project, unless any First Nation indicates otherwise. After five years, NTC COVID-19 Research Team will consult with each First



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Nation's leadership on whether to destroy or keep the blood samples and data for future use.

- Paper forms of data, such as questionnaire and consent/assent forms, are stored at a locked, secure place at NTC Office. Electronic data will be stored on a NTC controlled server at Population Data BC (PopDataBC), housed at the University of British Columbia, and will be de-identified. Access to de-identified data will be granted to the authorized research team members for analysis.

Are you giving COVID-19 vaccines?

No. We are not giving any vaccines including the new Bivalent Vaccine. We are only doing COVID-19 vaccine research to better understand the effect of the vaccines and the pandemic on Nuuchahnulth communities.

Are you providing medical advice on the COVID-19 vaccines?

No. Our team is not providing medical advice on COVID-19 vaccines. Please contact your health care provider for advice on this topic.

Do I have to participate in all research activities?

No. You can participate in all, some, or none of the activities, it's up to you. You can also change your mind and withdraw at any time.

How can this research potentially benefit Nuuchahnulth-aht?

This project provides opportunities for Nuuchahnulth-aht to

- share your voice and experience with COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine in your Nations, communities, and families living both at home and away from home.
- know your antibody levels and strength in 'fighting' future COVID-19 infections and make informed decisions on vaccinations.
- understand safety of the COVID-19 vaccine by documenting side effects following COVID-19 vaccination.
- co-create the health research to meet needs and desires of your community.

Through increased understanding and knowledge, the project may potentially help to:

- plan and improve future health care services and pandemic responses
- empower participating Nations to develop their own data governance and management pathways
- build research capacity and capability across Nuuchahnulth First Nations.

Where will research activities be done?

Data will be collected in each of the participating NCN communities, plus cities including Port Alberni, Nanaimo, Vancouver, Campbell River, and Victoria.

Who can participate in the COVID-19 Vaccine Project?



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- Nuu-chah-nulth-aht living both in-community/on-reserve and away from home/in urban areas.
- People living in NCN communities that may not be Nuu-chah-nulth (e.g., a spouse, other family members)
- Volunteers/staff for NCN Nations and NTC

Can I participate if I haven't been vaccinated?

Yes. For all activities, with exception of the follow-up questionnaire, the project is welcoming both unvaccinated and vaccinated participants (with any type and number of COVID-19 vaccine shots received).

When is this research happening and when do I need to decide if I want to participate?

The project is ongoing now until March 31, 2023 and we are working with each Nation individually to plan data collection days. There will be ongoing engagement/information sharing leading up to data collection.

For more information, contact community-based researcher for Ucluelet First Nation:

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