

It's here: The COVID-19 vaccine

Winning the fight against COVID-19 requires a multilayered defense. And now we have a promising new weapon in that fight: vaccines. Widespread vaccination is one of the most effective tactics to combat the virus. **Social distancing, masks, good ventilation and hygiene are still important to this pandemic fight for those who are unvaccinated.** The current COVID-19 vaccines are HIGHLY effective in preventing COVID-19 and its symptoms.



Safety

Many are asking about the safety of the vaccines. In fact, about 50%-70% of Americans, including those in at-risk segments, have expressed uncertainty toward COVID-19 vaccination at some point, according to a survey by **McKinsey & Company**.

Despite these concerns, the consensus among the medical community is that the **vaccine is safe** based on **clinical trials** and the FDA approval process. For more information on sorting through fact and fiction, check out **this** list of reliable fact checkers.

Rollout

As of May 10, 2021, all Americans aged 12 and up are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine. The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) has provided a **state-by-state list** of resources to the state's public health sites.

Another resource is **VaccineFinder**, which helps the public find vaccine providers in their area.

See [XX](#) for more information about our vaccine policy.

Efficacy

All authorized vaccines are effective at keeping people from getting COVID-19. The vaccines also have high efficacy at preventing hospitalization and death in people who may become ill. As more vaccines become available to the public, it is important to take the first authorized vaccine that is offered instead of waiting for a preferred vaccine, as this will slow the spread of the virus.

Cost

For the vast majority of individuals who have insurance through an employer, the vaccine will be at no cost. Additionally, the vaccine should be given at no cost to all uninsured U.S. citizens as well. Since the federal government is paying for the vaccine, the provider can submit a claim for the administration of the vaccine to the federal government.

Getting the vaccine

The process for receiving a COVID-19 vaccine may be slightly different than what you may be used to when getting the influenza vaccine.

In the case of the COVID-19 vaccine, you will be asked to wait 15-30 minutes after receiving the vaccination to make sure there is no reaction. This is normal and required. Remember the risk of a severe reaction is EXTREMELY low. The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines require two doses. For the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the two doses are taken three weeks apart, and for Moderna, a month apart. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires only one dose. While all three vaccines begin to offer protection soon after administration, it is vital to receive both doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines.

You are not properly safeguarded against COVID-19 until you receive the second dose, as the real protection rates occur about two weeks after the second dose.

Some potential **reactions** include soreness and redness at the injection site, headache, nausea or muscle stiffness. These reactions are common with many vaccines, so no cause for worry.

If you have had a serious reaction to prior immunizations or have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, remember to talk to your healthcare professional.

Testing and trials are still being conducted for children. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has an indication that now includes anyone 12 years and older, while the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are recommended for people 18 years and older.

What's next

In addition to the COVID-19 vaccines having been shown to be HIGHLY effective in preventing COVID-19 infections, recent evidence also shows the vaccines are also highly effective in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 to others. While this is great news, it is still recommended you wear a mask if you are around anyone who is at high risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 or consider wearing a mask in public indoor situations where other people may not be vaccinated.

**DATA SUGGEST THE VACCINES
WILL BE MORE PROTECTIVE
AGAINST FUTURE INFECTIONS
THAN THE NATURAL IMMUNITY
AFTER HAVING RECOVERED
FROM COVID-19.**



DON'T FORGET YOUR FLU SHOT! THE FLU AND COVID-19 ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT, AND YOU CAN GET BOTH. MAKE SURE TO GET YOUR FLU SHOT AS WELL AS YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE, SO YOU STAY HEALTHY AND HELP MINIMIZE THE IMPACT ON OUR HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS.

COVID-19 vaccine FAQ



There is a lot of information circulating about the COVID-19 vaccine — as well as some misinformation. Below are answers to frequently asked questions to make the most educated decision for you and your family.

WHERE CAN I GET THE VACCINE? The location and availability of vaccines varies by state.

Individuals and employers will need to visit their location-specific public health department for more information. The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) has provided a [state-by-state list](#) of resources to the state's public health sites.

Another resource is [VaccineFinder](#), which helps the public find vaccine providers in their area.

WILL <SAMPLE COMPANY> REQUIRE ME TO GET THE VACCINE? <Sample Company> encourages, but will not require, our employees to get the vaccine. By getting the vaccine when it is available to you, you will help protect yourself, your family, your coworkers and your community from COVID-19. In addition, getting the vaccine will reduce your risk of expensive treatment and hospitalization.

IS THE VACCINE SAFE? Yes, **clinical trials** and the FDA EUA approval process have shown the vaccine is safe. For more information on common misconceptions, [click here for a list of fact checkers](#). Consult your doctor if you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, if you have had a serious reaction to a vaccine before or if you're taking any medications that might interfere with the vaccine.

WILL THE VACCINE GIVE ME COVID-19? No, it's important to note that the U.S.-approved vaccines for COVID-19 DO NOT use live viruses or have any way to make a live virus. Unlike versions of the influenza vaccine 12+ years ago, which at that time used a weakened flu virus in the vaccine, there is no live virus or ability to make a live virus with the COVID-19 vaccines. It's worth noting that if you develop an immune response from the vaccine, you might test positive on an antibody test, which is not the same as an active infection test.

WILL THE VACCINE MAKE ME SICK? As with any vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine has a risk of **minor reactions**, including pain and swelling at injection site, fever, chills, fatigue and headache. Symptoms from the vaccine are generally considered to be mild, such as soreness in the arm or one-day flu.

I'VE ALREADY HAD COVID-19. DO I STILL NEED THE VACCINE? Yes! People who have had COVID-19 may still benefit from the vaccine. Without it, reinfection is a risk.

IS THIS A ONE-AND-DONE VACCINE? Not necessarily. If you receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you will only need one dose. If you receive the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine, you will need two doses of the vaccine in order for it to be effective. Do not forget to coordinate the second dose with the clinic or physician's office after you receive the first dose — it should be administered three weeks or one month after the first dose, depending on the vaccine. We also do not yet know if this will become an annual vaccine like the flu shot. Continued trials will determine the durability of the vaccine.

WILL THIS VACCINE ALTER MY DNA? No, the COVID-19 vaccine will not alter your DNA. In reality, it is giving your body the instructions to produce an immune response to the COVID-19 virus. It is telling your body how to recognize a part of the virus called the spike protein so that your body can defend itself. In this way, it is protecting you from getting COVID-19 in case you are exposed to the coronavirus in the future. Generally it takes approximately 14 days after the vaccination for your body to begin to be protected.

HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST ME? The cost of the vaccine itself is free to you via the federal government and/or insurance plan. The cost to administer the vaccine is also covered by most plans. Additionally, U.S. citizens without health insurance can receive the vaccine at no cost as well since the provider can file a claim to the federal government. *(Companies will need to review their answer to this question and modify as appropriate.)*

NOW THAT THERE'S A VACCINE, CAN LIFE GET BACK TO NORMAL? Until we have reached a sufficient level of immunity across the country, there may still be precautions in place such as mask wearing and social distancing. Monitor the [CDC's website](#) for the latest guidance and [information](#) about what to expect after you've been vaccinated.