

Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions for Individuals Ages 65 and Older and Individuals with Two or More of Certain Health Conditions



Updated 6 March 2021

As of February 18, 2021, individuals aged 65 or older, and individuals aged 16 or older with two or more of the health conditions or factors that increase risk of severe illness from COVID-19 listed below are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine:

- [Cancer](#)
- [Chronic kidney disease](#)
- [COPD \(chronic obstructive pulmonary disease\)](#)
- [Down Syndrome](#)
- [Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies](#)
- [Immunocompromised state \(weakened immune system\) from solid organ transplant](#)
(NOTE: For this group, this does not include individuals who are immunocompromised due to other conditions, such as blood or bone marrow transplant or HIV)
- [Obesity and severe obesity \(body mass index \[BMI\] of 30 kg/m² or higher\)](#)
- [Pregnancy](#)
- [Sickle cell disease](#)
- [Smoking](#)
- [Type 2 diabetes mellitus](#)
- [Asthma \(moderate-to-severe\)](#)

Below are some frequently asked questions related to the vaccine, appointment scheduling, and what to expect at and after your appointment.

Vaccine Safety	
Question	Answer
Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?	<p>Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe. Vaccines undergo rigorous testing and large clinical trials with diverse participants before they are approved for widespread use.</p> <p>The vaccine doesn't have any of the virus that causes COVID-19 in it. The only thing the vaccine has in it is a substance that tells your body to make antibodies that protect you from COVID-19.</p>

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	<p>Getting a vaccine is the best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 and may also help protect loved ones who are not yet vaccinated.</p> <p>For more on vaccine safety, visit www.mass.gov/covidvaccinesafety</p>
<p>How do I know the vaccine is safe?</p>	<p>COVID-19 vaccines available in Massachusetts are made by three companies: Moderna, Pfizer, and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson). These vaccines were authorized by the Federal Food and Drug Administration only after they were shown to be safe and effective in studies (called clinical trials).</p> <p>The U.S. ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Learn how the federal government is working to ensure the safety of COVID-19 vaccines.</p> <p>In Massachusetts, a group of infectious disease experts reviewed the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines. This workgroup confirmed that the COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the FDA are safe and effective.</p> <p>Learn more about vaccine safety, how it was developed, and how it works.</p>
<p>Should I be concerned the vaccine was developed so quickly?</p>	<p>We understand the importance of being open and honest about the safety and development of the vaccine— especially for communities who have suffered consequences of medical mistreatment. The COVID-19 vaccine was developed quickly but all of the same safety steps were followed for this vaccine that are used for all vaccines.</p> <p>Vaccine companies moved quickly because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They used existing research and information on coronavirus: COVID-19 is part of a family of viruses that has been studied for a long time. The vaccine developers used this existing research to help develop the COVID-19 vaccine. • Governments funded vaccine research: The United States and other governments invested a lot of money to help vaccine companies with their work. Working together with other countries also helped researchers move quickly.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tens of thousands of people participated in vaccine studies: Studies of the vaccine (called Clinical Trials) were conducted to prove the vaccine is safe and effective. Tens of thousands of people signed up for the studies, so companies did not need to spend a lot of time finding volunteers. • Manufacturing happened at the same time as the safety studies: Vaccine companies started making the vaccine at the same time as studies were happening in hopes that it would be proven safe and effective. This meant vaccines were ready to be distributed once they were approved. <p>Since the vaccines were approved, millions of people of different races and ethnicities have been vaccinated, and most have only experienced mild side effects.</p>
<p>Is the COVID-19 Vaccine effective?</p>	<p>All three approved COVID-19 vaccines are safe and highly effective against serious illness, hospitalization, and death.</p>
<p>What types of COVID-19 vaccines are available?</p> <p>Can I choose which one I take?</p>	<p>There are three FDA authorized vaccines at this time: Moderna, Pfizer, and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson). The Pfizer vaccine is authorized for ages 16 and older. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are authorized for ages 18 and older.</p> <p>Recipients will receive the vaccine offered to them when they attend a vaccination clinic. All of the vaccines are highly effective and safe. The best vaccine is the one that is available to you. Residents are urged to take whatever shot they can, as soon as it's available.</p>
<p>What's the difference between Moderna and Pfizer?</p>	<p>The two vaccines are similar. Both need two doses, have similar safety & side effects, and provide the same protection. Which shot you receive depends on vaccine supply and location, unless you are under 18 years old Only the Pfizer vaccine is approved for 16- and 17-year olds; you must be at least 18 years old to receive the Moderna vaccine.</p>
<p>Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?</p>	<p>The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that COVID-19 vaccines be offered to pregnant and breastfeeding individuals when they meet prioritization criteria for receiving the vaccine. COVID-19 infection during pregnancy can increase the risk of severe illness and might result in an increased risk of outcomes like</p>

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	<p>preterm birth. Currently there are limited data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.</p> <p>Getting vaccinated is a personal choice for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding. If you have questions, a discussion with your healthcare provider might help you make an informed decision.</p>
Will the vaccine have any effect on fertility?	<p>No. People who are trying to become pregnant now or who plan to try in the future may receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available to them.</p> <p>COVID-19 vaccines are being studied carefully now and will continue to be studied for many years, similar to other vaccines. Based on what we know right now, experts believe that COVID-19 vaccines are safe for someone who is trying to become pregnant in the short or long term.</p> <p>Here's why:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID-19 vaccine, like other vaccines, works by teaching our bodies to develop antibodies that fight against the virus that causes COVID-19, to prevent future illness. • There is no evidence right now that antibodies formed from COVID-19 vaccination will cause any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta. <p>In fact, there is no evidence that fertility problems are a side effect of ANY vaccine.</p>
Do any of the vaccines contain harmful ingredients?	<p>The ingredients for each of the vaccines can be found publicly on the FDA website and are the safest, most effective ingredients possible. The vaccines do not contain eggs, gelatin, preservatives, or latex.</p> <p>The vaccine does not contain any harmful ingredients. The vaccine does not contain preservatives. The vaccine does not contain adjuvants. The vaccine does not contain thimerosal.</p>
How do mRNA vaccines work?	<p>Pfizer and Moderna use a small, harmless part of the virus's genetic material called 'messenger RNA'. This is not part of the harmful COVID-19 virus. This messenger RNA delivers the instructions to your cells to make a protein found on the virus,</p>

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	<p>called the “spike protein”. This protein cannot harm you. Your body’s immune system recognizes and responds to the protein to develop antibodies that protect you against the virus.</p>
<p>Will a COVID-19 vaccine change my DNA?</p>	<p>No. The COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way.</p> <p>Vaccines teach our immune system how to fight against a specific virus. They work with the body’s natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease. In order to do its job, the COVID-19 vaccine doesn’t need to go inside the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. This means the vaccine never interacts with our DNA in any way and has no way to change it.</p> <p>At the end of the process, our bodies have learned how to protect against future infection. That immune response and making antibodies is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.</p>
<p>Will the COVID-19 vaccine contain a microchip?</p>	<p>Neither of the COVID-19 vaccines contain a microchip. No vaccine has ever had a microchip in it. This is not proposed for a future COVID-19 vaccine.</p>
<p>How are vaccinations tested for safety and effectiveness?</p>	<p>Like all pharmaceuticals, vaccines are carefully tested before approval or authorization by the Food and Drug Administration and continue to be monitored once they start being used by the public.</p> <p>The vaccines are tested in volunteers during clinical trials occurring as part of the three-phased vaccine clinical trial process. The first three vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) approval are: 1) the Pfizer/BioNTech, 2) Moderna, and 3) Janssen (Johnson & Johnson).</p> <p>During the 3 phases of the clinical trials, researchers first test the vaccine for safety and then for how well it protects volunteers from the virus.</p> <p>The clinical trials started first with very small groups of people, then larger groups. In each group, researchers are collecting information about the safety of the vaccines and how it protects against COVID-19.</p>

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Who else reviews the safety and effectiveness data from the clinical trials?	The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is an independent advisory committee made up of experts that carefully reviews all available data about the vaccine from clinical trials and other studies and makes recommendations to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for vaccine use in the general public.
How is vaccine safety monitored after it's been approved or authorized?	<p>Both the vaccine manufacturers and government agencies are responsible for monitoring the ongoing roll-out and use of the 2 authorized COVID-19 vaccines.</p> <p>There are several ongoing and new vaccine safety monitoring systems. For more information, go to the CDC website, FDA VAERS, V-SAFE, Vaccine Safety Data Link, PRISM, CISA.</p> <p>CDC and FDA collect reports of possible side effects to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). This national system collects these data to look for adverse events that are unexpected, appear to happen more often than expected, or have unusual patterns of occurrence. The public can report side effects online or by phone.</p> <p>When you receive your vaccine, you may enroll in a smartphone-based tool called V-safe which is used to check-in on people's health after they get the COVID-19 vaccine. If you enroll, you will contribute to our understanding of the vaccine. You will receive regular text messages directing you to surveys where you can report any problems or adverse reactions you have after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. For more information on V-safe, please go to the following website: http://www.cdc.gov/vsafe</p>
What is Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?	An EUA allows a vaccine to be used during a pandemic when there is not enough time to conduct the full 1-2 years of follow-up data collection normally required for an approval.
Why do EUAs exist?	The EUA allows the vaccine to be used once it is shown to be safe and there is a short-term benefit, meanwhile the longer-term benefit data are being collected.
What are the criteria for an EUA?	EUA applications are made by the manufacturer and the decision to authorize use is made by the FDA.

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Health Conditions Known to Increase Risk

Question	Answer
Will I need a doctor's note or other proof that I have two or more of the specific medical conditions?	You do not need a doctor's note or other proof of eligibility. You will not be asked to share any specific health information or medical diagnoses when you book an appointment or when you receive the vaccine. You will only be asked to confirm that you meet the current eligibility criteria. Please honor the eligibility criteria and understand that priority for the currently limited vaccine supply goes to people who are at greatest risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
I am not sure whether I meet the eligibility criteria for having two or more specific medical conditions. What should I do?	If you are under 65 years old and you have questions about your eligibility due to medical conditions, please talk to your health care provider. Everyone ages 65 or older is currently eligible to get the vaccine.
In the past, I had two of these specific medical conditions, but I no longer have them both. Am I still eligible?	If you are under 65 years old and you have questions about your eligibility due to medical conditions, please talk to your health care provider. Everyone ages 65 or older is currently eligible to get the vaccine.
My child has two or more of the specific medical conditions on this list. Are they eligible to be vaccinated?	None of the COVID-19 vaccines are approved for children under age 16 at this time. The Pfizer vaccine is approved for children aged 16 or 17, so youth in this age group who meet current eligibility criteria may receive the Pfizer vaccine. The Moderna and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccines are only approved for people aged 18 or older.
I am a cancer survivor. Am I eligible for vaccine at this time?	The CDC has indicated having cancer currently increases your risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and that at this time, it is not known whether having a history of cancer increases your risk. At this time, individuals who currently have cancer and have one or more of the other specified health conditions ¹ are eligible for vaccine.
I use vape products. Am I eligible for vaccine at this time?	The CDC has indicated active and former cigarette smokers are known to be at higher risk for severe disease due to COVID-19. At this time, current and former cigarette smokers with 1 or more of the other specified health conditions ¹ are eligible for vaccine.

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<p>I'm immunocompromised. Am I eligible for vaccine at this time?</p>	<p>The CDC has indicated that individuals who are immunocompromised due to solid organ transplant are at higher risk for severe disease due to COVID-19. While individuals may be immunocompromised for other reasons (such as from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines), the CDC has indicated these individuals might be at higher risk for severe disease due to COVID-19.</p> <p>At this time, individuals who are immunocompromised due to solid organ transplant and have one or more of the other specified health conditions¹ are eligible for vaccine.</p>
<p>Can I get the vaccine if I am immunocompromised?</p>	<p>Immunocompromised people and those on immunosuppressive medications may be at increased risk for severe COVID-19. Immunocompromised individuals and those on immunosuppressive medications or therapies may receive COVID-19 vaccination if they have no contraindications to vaccination.</p> <p>You should talk to your health care provider about your specific conditions.</p>
<p>Does having 2+ different medical conditions within the same category (e.g. skin cancer and breast cancer; coronary artery disease and cardiomyopathies) count as having one or two medical conditions?</p>	<p>Each category of condition (e.g. cancer) counts as one medical condition even if a person has more than one diagnosis in that category.</p>

Scheduling an Appointment

Question	Answer
<p>Where can I go to get a vaccine?</p>	<p>There are several locations where individuals may receive vaccinations, including higher volume mass vaccination sites, pharmacies, certain health care offices, and community vaccination clinics operated by local boards of health.</p> <p>Go here for a list of all locations visit https://www.mass.gov/covidvaccinelocations</p>

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<p>Can I just go to my doctor's office?</p>	<p>Because vaccine supply is limited, your doctor may not yet have a supply of vaccine. Some practices are reaching out to patients when vaccine appointments are available. Please wait for your provider to reach out instead of calling your doctor's office at this time.</p>
<p>Can I just go to the Veteran's Affairs (VA)?</p>	<p>If you receive care through the VA, you can call your local VA location to see if they have appointments available.</p>
<p>I cannot access the internet, is there someone I can call to help schedule?</p>	<p>Individuals who are unable to use or have difficulty accessing the internet to schedule an appointment online may use the Massachusetts Vaccine Scheduling Resource Line:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Call 2-1-1 (877-211-6277) and follow prompts for assistance booking an appointment Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM</p> <p>The Massachusetts Vaccine Scheduling Resource Line is available in English and Spanish and will have interpreters available to support residents in approximately 100 additional languages. Individuals will be able to speak to a representative live on the phone to assist them with an appointment through the state's online system. These representatives have the same access to appointments as on the public website; they do not have access to additional appointments. If no appointments are available, callers will have the option to be placed on a call back list for the mass vaccination sites. The caller will receive a call back when an appointment becomes available for them at a mass vaccination site, and the list will be called on a first-come, first-served basis.</p>
<p>How do I schedule an appointment for my second dose?</p>	<p>You should schedule your appointment for a second dose when you go in and receive your first dose. The vaccine location should help you schedule an appointment for your second dose.</p>
<p>Do I have to get the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccination at the same place as I got the first dose?</p>	<p>Both doses of the vaccine series should be completed with the same product. You should receive the second dose of your vaccine at the same location you received the first one. This will help ensure your first and second doses come from the same manufacturer, which is necessary for the vaccine to protect you fully.</p>

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<p>How much will the COVID-19 vaccine cost?</p>	<p>The vaccine is free of charge to you. If you have insurance, it will be billed, but your insurance company will not ask for any out-of-pocket or copay charges from you. You are also able to receive the vaccine if you do not have insurance.</p> <p>Vaccination locations cannot charge you a fee for getting the vaccine. You will never be asked for a credit card number or any other form of payment for the vaccine.</p>
<p>What do I need to schedule a vaccine appointment?</p>	<p>When scheduling your appointment, you must review the eligibility criteria and confirm you are eligible to receive the vaccine (e.g., you are age 65 or older, or have two or more of certain health conditions¹). The attestation will be done online if scheduling your appointment online, verbally over the phone, or verbally or in writing at the vaccination location. If you have health insurance, you should have your card or insurance information ready as well. You will never be asked for a credit card number or any other form of payment for the vaccine.</p>
<p>I don't have an email address; can I still schedule an appointment?</p>	<p>Yes, you can use a close family member or friend's email address, if available.</p> <p>If you are unable to use or have difficulty accessing the internet, please contact the Massachusetts Vaccine Scheduling Resource Line Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM at 2-1-1 (877-211-6277) for assistance scheduling an appointment. Individuals will be able to speak to a representative live on the phone to assist them with an appointment through the state's online system. These representatives have the same access to appointments as on the public website; it will not give individuals access to additional appointments. If no appointments are available, callers will have the option to be placed on a call back list for the mass vaccination sites. The caller will receive a call back when an appointment becomes available for them at a mass vaccination site, and the list will be called on a first-come, first-served basis.</p>
<p>I received the first dose in another state and am now in MA, what do I do?</p>	<p>If you cannot get your second dose where you got your first one, you can get your second dose here. Please be sure to keep the vaccination card you were given at the time of your first dose.</p>
<p>How long before I can get an appointment?</p>	<p>Because demand for appointments is very high and vaccine supply is limited, you may need to wait several weeks or more before an appointment is available.</p>

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Preparing for Your Appointment

Question	Answer
<p>What do I need for my vaccine appointment, what if I don't have an ID?</p>	<p>When the appointment is scheduled, the vaccination location will provide specific details on any information you may need to bring to the appointment. If you have health insurance card, please bring it with you to the appointment, although it is not required to receive the vaccine.</p> <p>If you do not have insurance, you may be asked to provide a Social Security number. If you do not have one you can still receive the vaccine. If you have a photo ID, you should bring it with you to the appointment. If you do not have one, you can still receive the vaccine.</p> <p>You will never be asked for a credit card number or any other form of payment for the vaccine. You do not need a letter for your doctor or other documentation confirming health conditions that make you eligible to get the vaccine.</p>
<p>Will I need a doctor's note or other proof that I have two or more of the specific medical conditions?</p>	<p>You do not need a doctor's note or other proof of eligibility. You will not be asked to share any specific health information or medical diagnoses when you book an appointment or when you receive the vaccine. You will only be asked to confirm that you meet the current eligibility criteria. Please honor the eligibility criteria and understand that priority for the currently limited vaccine supply goes to people who are at greatest risk for severe illness from COVID-19.</p>
<p>How much of my personal information will I need to share to get the vaccine?</p>	<p>Your privacy is a top priority, and your private information is being protected. Like with other medical visits, you will need to share some information, including your name, date of birth, and health insurance information if you have it with the vaccine provider.</p> <p>The Massachusetts Department of Public Health keeps an electronic record of each patient in Massachusetts who receives the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine database is kept confidential like a patient's medical record with their doctor.</p>
<p>Do I have to be a US Citizen to get the vaccine?</p>	<p>No. You do not need to be a U.S. citizen to get a COVID-19 vaccine.</p>

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<p>Will I be considered a “public charge” if I receive the vaccine?</p>	<p>No. The federal government has confirmed that receiving COVID-19 treatment (including a vaccine) will not have a negative impact on anyone’s immigration status or determine them to be a “public charge”. You are eligible to receive the vaccine free of charge regardless of citizenship or status.</p>
<p>Is there transportation available for my appointment?</p>	<p>Some health insurers, including MassHealth, can help arrange transportation to your vaccine appointment. There also may be local community organizations, such as Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs) and Councils on Aging (COAs) that can assist you in finding transportation.</p>
<p>Are the vaccination locations accessible?</p>	<p>Accessibility services depend on the location. All mass vaccination locations are wheelchair accessible and do not require consumers to use stairs. Many of the locations have a drop off area for people who may benefit from walking shorter distances and people will not be waiting in line outside. Some locations may also provide mobility assistance. Language translation services are available for all mass vaccination locations and many other vaccination locations. Please review the specific vaccination location details to determine whether this is an appropriate fit for your accessibility needs.</p>
<p>Will I have to walk a long distance when I arrive?</p>	<p>The exact set up and distance will be different at each site. At the mass vaccination sites, you will not have to use stairs. It is encouraged to check the accessibility and availability of wheelchairs and other assistance at the individual site prior to your appointment.</p>
<p>Will I have to wait outside/in line/is there a place to sit?</p>	<p>It is possible you may need to wait in line at certain vaccine locations. We encourage you to consider bringing a wheelchair if it is hard for you to stand for long periods of time or requesting a wheelchair when you arrive at a mass vaccination location.</p>
<p>How long will the appointment take?</p>	<p>Once you receive the vaccine, a health care provider at the location will monitor you for any reactions you may have after getting vaccinated. They will watch you for at least 15 minutes after the injection (or for 30 minutes if you have a history of allergic reaction of any severity to a vaccine or injectable therapy).</p>
<p>Can I bring someone with me to help?</p>	<p>Yes, you may bring someone with you to help. We also encourage you to bring a wheelchair if it is hard for you to stand for long periods of time.</p>

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Can they get the vaccine too?	A companion accompanying someone who is 75 years of age or older may receive the vaccine at mass vaccination sites, as long as they have also scheduled an appointment.
What if I can't take time off work to go to an appointment?	Vaccination locations are open seven days of week and some have extended hours. Once you are eligible to receive a vaccine, you may make an appointment for a date and time that is convenient for your schedule.
Can I bring my baby or child(ren) with me to the vaccine appointment?	Yes. You may bring children who do not have another caretaker to your vaccine appointment.
What is the vaccination plan for individuals who are unable to leave their home due to health conditions for a routine medical appointment?	Additional information regarding vaccination options will be released shortly for individuals unable to leave the home for a medical appointment without an ambulance or two people assisting. Please note, that some people may be able to receive the vaccine if they live at an eligible affordable senior housing property , where an on-location clinic may be planned.
What happens if I miss or need to cancel my appointment?	If you miss or need to cancel your appointment you will need to work with the vaccine location to reschedule to another time.
Will I receive anything to prove I received the vaccine?	You will receive a vaccination card or printout that tells you what COVID-19 vaccine you received, the date you received it, and where you received it. It is important that you keep the vaccination card and bring it to your second appointment, if applicable. You should also receive a paper or electronic version of a fact sheet that tells you more about the specific COVID-19 vaccine you are being offered.
Should I get tested to see if I am infected before I take the vaccine?	No, a COVID-19 test is not needed before getting the vaccine.

After Your Appointment

Question	Answer
Do I still need to wear a mask and social distance after receiving the vaccine?	Yes. We know that the vaccines are very effective at protecting the person vaccinated from getting sick, but we don't yet know how well they protect against transmission. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to us to help stop this pandemic, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from

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	<p>others. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following the CDC's recommendations for how to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19.</p>
<p>Do I need to follow the travel order if I have received two doses of the vaccine?</p>	<p>Yes. At this time, vaccinated individuals must continue to comply with the Governor's Travel Order and related testing and quarantine requirements. It is important for everyone to continue using all the public health measures available to help stop this pandemic. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and wash your hands often, even after you have received the vaccine.</p>
<p>What are the side effects of the vaccine?</p>	<p>It is important to remember that the benefits of the vaccine far outweigh the potential side effects—it is the best way to protect yourself from COVID-19.</p> <p>It is possible that some people may have side effects after being vaccinated, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.</p> <p>The most common side effects are minor and include tiredness, headache, pain at the injection site, muscle and/or joint pain, chills, nausea and/or vomiting, and fever.</p>
<p>Can the vaccine cause an allergic reaction?</p>	<p>In very rare cases, the COVID-19 vaccines can cause a serious severe allergic reaction in a small, specific group of people.</p> <p>The health care provider giving the vaccine will monitor you for any reactions you may have after getting vaccinated. They will watch you for at least 15 minutes after the injection (or for 30 minutes if you have a history of allergic reaction of any severity to a vaccine or injectable therapy).</p> <p>You should not get the COVID-19 vaccines if you have a history of severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) to any ingredient in the vaccine. A history of a severe allergic reaction due to any other cause is considered a precaution and should be discussed with your health care provider before receiving the vaccine.</p> <p>Sites giving COVID-19 vaccines will have health care staff, medications, and supplies for managing allergic reactions on hand in case you have a severe allergic reaction to the vaccine.</p>

¹ Individuals with 2 or more of the following health conditions are eligible to receive vaccine: cancer; chronic kidney disease; COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease); Down Syndrome; heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies; immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant; obesity and severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 kg/m² or higher); pregnancy; sickle cell disease; smoking; Type 2 diabetes mellitus; Asthma (moderate-to-severe)

<p>Should someone with a history of allergies get the COVID-19 vaccine?</p>	<p>You should not get the COVID-19 vaccines if you have a history of severe allergic reaction (also called anaphylaxis) to any ingredient in the vaccine. If you have a history of a severe allergic reaction to something else that's not in the vaccine, discuss with your health care provider before receiving the vaccine.</p> <p>Although there is a small chance that the COVID-19 vaccines could cause a severe allergic reaction, this would usually happen within a few minutes to one hour after getting the vaccine. Everyone, even if they don't have allergies, is monitored for at least 15 minutes after getting a COVID-19 vaccine.</p>
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Other Questions

Question	Answer
<p>How many doses or shots is the COVID-19 Vaccine?</p>	<p>Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses to be fully protected from COVID-19 disease. The Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) only requires one dose.</p> <p>The Pfizer vaccine doses are given at least 3 weeks apart. The Moderna vaccine doses are given at 4 weeks apart.</p>
<p>Will I be protected if I only receive the first dose?</p>	<p>It is very important to get both doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to protect you against severe disease. The only way to make sure you are fully protected is to get both doses of the vaccine. The new virus mutations that we are seeing across the globe make it even more important that everyone get 2 doses of vaccine.</p>
<p>Will the vaccine still be effective if I wait longer than a few weeks between my first and second dose?</p>	<p>Your second shot is recommended at 21 days for Pfizer and 28 days for Moderna, but any time up to 6 weeks (42 days) after the first dose is in line with CDC guidance. You should not get the second dose earlier than 21 days for Pfizer or 28 days for Moderna.</p>
<p>Will the vaccine protect against all strains of COVID-19?</p>	<p>It is normal for viruses to change as they spread, and for new mutations to appear. Scientists are working to learn more about new COVID-19 mutations to understand how easily they might spread, and whether the vaccines we already have will protect people against them. So far, studies suggest that currently authorized vaccines provide protection from the variants.</p>

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Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?	No. The vaccines do not contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.
Will a COVID-19 vaccine cause me to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests? Will a COVID-19 vaccine cause me to test positive on COVID-19 antibody tests?	The COVID-19 vaccines cannot cause you to test positive on a COVID-19 viral test. If you test positive on a COVID-19 viral test following vaccination you should consider it a real positive and contact your health care provider. Following vaccination, it is possible you may test positive on some antibody tests. Positive antibody tests mean that you have some level of protection against the virus either because of a previous infection or because of successful vaccination.
If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get the vaccine?	Yes, people who have previously had COVID-19 should be vaccinated. While having and recovering from COVID-19 provides some immunity, research shows that those antibodies are not as protective as those from the vaccine and because it is possible to catch COVID-19 more than once.
Should someone who is COVID-19-positive receive the vaccine?	No. People who are known to have COVID-19 should wait to be vaccinated until their isolation period has ended, usually 10 days after symptoms started or, if they didn't have symptoms, 10 days after their test was positive.
Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine (or any vaccine) at the same time?	No. You should wait 14 days between any of the two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and any other vaccines.
Will I still need to isolate or quarantine, if I am exposed to someone who has COVID-19 after I have received the COVID-19 vaccine?	Yes. You will still need to follow all CDC guidance on isolating and quarantining if exposed to COVID-19. We know that the vaccines are very effective at protecting the person vaccinated from getting sick, but we don't yet know how well they protect against transmission. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to us to help stop this pandemic.
Is there a non-injectable version of the vaccine?	No, the three FDA authorized vaccines are only injectable.
How long after getting the COVID-19 vaccine does it take to be effective?	It usually takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after

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	<p>vaccination and get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.</p> <p>It is unknown yet whether the vaccine prevents transmission and no vaccine is 100% protective. So for now we will need to continue wearing masks and practicing physical distancing even after we receive the vaccine.</p>
How long will immunity last?	<p>Researchers do not yet know how long the vaccine immunity lasts. The best prevention is still wearing a mask, washing hands, and social distancing until we know enough community immunity has been reached.</p>
If I get vaccinated, is it possible for me to still get a milder form of COVID-19 than if I would not have gotten vaccinated?	<p>The vaccine protects against severe disease caused by COVID-19. Similar to how COVID-19 can be spread by people without knowing they have it, vaccinated people may still be able to pass on an infection without getting sick.</p> <p>Until we know more, it is important to continue taking precautions, like wearing masks and practicing social distancing, even after you have been vaccinated.</p>
What are the Phases and/or What Phase am I in?	<p>Due to limited initial vaccine supply, Massachusetts is distributing the vaccine in groups based on need and risk. Individuals more likely to be exposed to the virus because of their job or at higher risk for bad outcomes will be offered the vaccine first.</p> <p>The first residents to get vaccinated as part of Phase 1 are COVID-facing health care workers and those living in long term care facilities. This began in December 2020. First responders, individuals and staff in congregate care settings, home-based health care workers, and non-COVID-facing health care workers are also part of Phase 1.</p> <p>Phase 2, which began on February 1st, starts with individuals aged 75 or older. It is followed by individuals who are 65 or older, as well as individuals with two or more of certain health conditions¹. Phase 2 also includes a number of essential worker categories and individuals with one specific risk factor.</p> <p>For more information, visit https://www.mass.gov/info-details/when-can-i-get-the-covid-19-vaccine</p>

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What Phase are we in now?	Information about who is currently eligible for a vaccine can be found at www.mass.gov/covidvaccine
When can I get my vaccine?	At the beginning, we will have a very limited supply of vaccines. This means not everyone who eligible will be able to get the vaccine right away. As more vaccine becomes available, it will be distributed to more people.
Am I required to receive the vaccine?	<p>The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is not mandating the COVID-19 vaccine. It is voluntary. The COVID-19 vaccine has been shown to be highly effective at preventing illness and it is an important tool in the fight against the pandemic.</p> <p>Employers may require COVID-19 vaccination for certain workers, you should discuss this with your employer.</p>
Will I be turned away if I try to get a vaccine before it becomes available to me?	The initial supply of COVID-19 vaccines will be limited, you will not be offered the vaccine if you do not meet the eligibility criteria of the prioritization phase.
Can family of high-risk individuals get vaccinated early too?	No, family members of high-risk individuals are not eligible to receive a vaccine in this current phase.
Will the COVID-19 become a yearly or routine vaccine?	Before scientists can know whether we need more shots of this or another COVID vaccine, we need more answers from ongoing research studies. Scientists are still learning about the length of immunity of these vaccines.

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