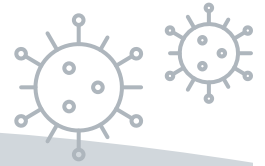


# Questions and answers about the COVID-19 vaccine



The federal government has been working since the pandemic started to make COVID-19 vaccines available as soon as possible. The goal has been to provide a safe vaccine that works. The vaccine has been approved in the United States and will be available to you later this month. We want to make sure you have all the information you need to make the best decision regarding receiving the vaccine. Below are some of the most frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.



## Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) carefully reviews all safety data from clinical trials and allows emergency vaccine use only when the expected benefits is more than the potential risks. COVID-19 vaccines were tested in large clinical trials to make sure they met strict safety standards. More than 70,000 people have participated in these trials to see how the vaccines offer protection to people of different ages, races, and backgrounds, as well as those with different underlying medical conditions.

## How does the vaccine work?

After receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, your body will learn how to protect itself if you were to be exposed to someone infected with COVID-19. Like all vaccines, anyone who is vaccinated gains this protection without ever having to risk the serious consequences of getting sick with COVID-19.

## Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No. The COVID-19 vaccines do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19. While you might feel minor, short-term side effects from the vaccine, it is impossible to contract the virus from the vaccine.

## What should I expect when receiving the vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine requires two shots, both administered in the upper arm muscle. The first shot starts building protection, but everyone needs to receive the second shot 28 days later to ensure they get the most protection the vaccine can offer. This is like other vaccines like Hepatitis B which require two doses. All vaccines are being administered in accordance with Department of Public Health (DPH) standards.

## Can I still spread the virus even after getting vaccinated?

We do not yet know whether vaccinated individuals can spread the virus to others who may not have received the vaccine. That is why it will be important that everyone continues to take precautions, including wearing masks, using proper hand hygiene, and social distancing. There is optimistic data from the clinical trials that vaccination will stop the spread of COVID-19 but it will take more time to know for sure.

## What if I decide not to get the vaccine?

It is your choice to receive or not receive the COVID-19 Vaccine. Should you decide not to receive it, it will not change your standard medical care.

## How will I Feel after taking the vaccine?

Some people who get a COVID-19 vaccine will experience side effects, particularly after the second dose. The side effects of the vaccine appear to be minor and temporary.

### Most Common Reported Side Effects:

- Injection site reaction
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle and Joint pain
- Chills
- Fever

**These side effects are called an “immune response.”** This is a response without infection and it’s a good thing! These short-term, easily managed side effects mean that the vaccine is working. They are significantly less risky than taking your chances with COVID-19 infection. These side effects fade within 1-2 days. These side effects are common with all vaccines.

## Are there any long-term side effects?

COVID-19 vaccines are still being tested for long-term side effects. At this point, no long-term safety issues have been detected. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are monitoring closely and as more people get vaccinated, additional information will be available in the coming weeks and months. CDC scientists and medical professionals will be continuously reviewing vaccine safety. They will keep providing information to the public and will act on new safety concerns if needed.

We are still learning about COVID-19 vaccines, here is what we do know for sure: getting sick with COVID-19 is dangerous. We know that COVID-19 can cause long-term health problems, even in mild cases. It is unlikely that we will find any vaccine-related side effects that are riskier than having COVID-19.

## I have a pre-existing condition. Will taking the vaccine have harmful effects?

We do not yet know for certain how individuals with different pre-existing conditions will react to the vaccine. It is clear, however, that those with other health complications are at a higher risk for complications of COVID-19 infection. If you have a pre-existing condition, you should consult your doctor on what is best for you.

## I already had COVID-19, do I still need a vaccine?

Yes, the vaccine is recommended for individuals who have recovered from COVID-19. In the clinical trial, 10% of the participants already had COVID-19 and receiving the vaccine appeared beneficial. People who have recovered from the infection may not have long lasting immunity and could become reinfected.

## How long after does an individual who has recovered from COVID-19 need to wait to get the vaccine?

They can get the vaccine right away after their recovery. Recovery is defined as 10 days after the diagnosis for mild to moderate infections and 20 days after the diagnosis for severe infections.

## Is the COVID-19 vaccine free?

You will not have to pay for the vaccine. The vaccine is free. You will not be charged any copay to receive the vaccine. If you experience side effects and need to submit a sick slip following the vaccine, you will not be charged for these visits as well.

