Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination

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CDC now recommends that people aged 65 years and older, residents aged 18 years and older in long-term care settings, and people aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions **should** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 Vaccine at least 6 months after completing their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series. Other groups **may** receive a booster shot based on their individual risk and benefit. Learn more.

- Below are answers to commonly asked questions about COVID-19 vaccination.
- Bust myths and learn the facts about COVID-19 vaccines

Safety

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe even though the vaccines were developed rapidly?

While COVID-19 vaccines were developed rapidly, all steps were taken to make sure they are safe and effective:

- **Approach to Development** – Scientists have been working for many years to develop vaccines against viruses like the one that causes COVID-19. This knowledge helped speed up the initial development of the current COVID-19 vaccines.
- **Clinical Trials** – All vaccines in the United States must go through three phases of clinical trials to make sure they are safe and effective. During the development of COVID-19 vaccines, phases overlapped to speed up the process, but all phases were completed.
- **Authorization or Approval** – Before vaccines are available to people, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) assesses the findings from clinical trials. FDA determined that three COVID-19 vaccines met FDA's safety and effectiveness standards and granted those vaccines Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) . This allowed the vaccines to be quickly distributed to control the pandemic. Pfizer-BioNTech (COMIRNATY) COVID-19 vaccine has now been FDA approved for people ages 16 years and older. Read more about the first COVID-19 vaccine to receive FDA approval .
- **Manufacturing and Distribution** – The U.S. government has invested substantial resources to manufacture and distribute COVID-19 vaccines. This allowed vaccine distribution to begin as soon as FDA authorized each vaccine.
- **Tracking Safety Using Vaccine Monitoring Systems –** COVID-19 vaccine safety monitoring has been the most intense and comprehensive in U.S. history. Hundreds of millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines. Through several monitoring systems, CDC and FDA continue to provide updated information on the safety of these vaccines.

Learn more about developing COVID-19 vaccines.

What are the ingredients in COVID-19 vaccines?

Vaccine ingredients vary by manufacturer. None of the vaccines contain eggs, gelatin, latex, or preservatives. All COVID-19 vaccines are **free from metals** such as iron, nickel, cobalt, lithium, and rare earth alloys. They are also free from manufactured products such as microelectronics, electrodes, carbon nanotubes, or nanowire semiconductors.

To learn more about the ingredients in authorized COVID-19 vaccines, see

- Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety
- Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety
- Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety
- Ingredients Included in COVID-19 Vaccines

If I am pregnant or planning to become pregnant, can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all people 12 years and older, including people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future. You might want to have a conversation with your healthcare provider about COVID-19 vaccination. While such a conversation might be helpful, it is not required before vaccination. Learn more about vaccination considerations for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

If you are pregnant and have received a COVID-19 vaccine, we encourage you to enroll in **v-safe,** CDC's smartphone-based tool that provides personalized health check-ins after vaccination. A v-safe pregnancy registry has been established to gather information on the health of pregnant people who have received a COVID-19 vaccine.

Related pages:

- COVID-19 Vaccines for Pregnant or Breastfeeding People
- Monitoring Systems for Pregnant People
- V-safe Pregnancy Registry
- Planning for Pregnancy

Why should my child get vaccinated against COVID-19?

COVID-19 vaccination can help protect your child from getting COVID-19. Although fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, can get sick from COVID-19, and can spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to others. Getting your child vaccinated helps to protect your child and your family. Vaccination is now recommended for everyone 12 years and older. Currently, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is the only one available to children 12 years and older.

COVID-19 vaccines have been used under the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history, including studies in children 12 years and older. Your child cannot get COVID-19 from any COVID-19 vaccine. Like adults, children may have some side effects after COVID-19 vaccination. These side effects may affect their ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

Related pages:

- COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens
- Pfizer-BioNTech
- Possible Side Effects
- Families and Children

Getting Your Vaccine

How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will I need to get? Do I need a booster?

The number of vaccine doses needed depends on which vaccine you receive. To get the most protection:

- Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine should be given 3 weeks (21 days) apart.
- Two doses of Moderna vaccine should be given 4 weeks (28 days) apart.
- Only one dose of Johnson & Johnson's Jansen (J&J/Janssen) vaccine should be given..

If you receive a vaccine that requires two doses, you should get your second shot as close to the recommended interval as possible**.** However, your second dose may be given up to 6 weeks (42 days) after the first dose. You should **not** get the second dose earlier than the recommended interval.

COVID-19 vaccines are not interchangeable. If you received a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, you should get the same product for your second shot and for any additional doses or booster shots.

People with moderately to severely compromised immune systems should receive an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) at least 28 days after the second dose.

CDC now recommends that people ages 65 years and older, residents ages 18 years and older in long-term care settings, and people ages 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions **should** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 Vaccine at least 6 months after completing their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series. Other groups **may** receive a Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot based on their individual risk and benefit.

Learn more about who is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot.

If I didn't get my second shot of a 2-dose COVID-19 vaccine within the recommended time, what should I do?

You should **get your second shot as close to the recommended 3-week or 4-week interval as possible**. There is currently limited information on the effectiveness of receiving your second shot later than 6 weeks after the first shot. However, if you receive your second shot of COVID-19 vaccine at any time after the recommended date, you do not have to restart the vaccine series, and you can be considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after getting your second shot. This guidance might be updated as more information becomes available.

Learn more about COVID-19 vaccines that require 2 shots.

How long does protection from a COVID-19 vaccine last?

It's not yet known how long COVID-19 vaccine protection lasts. Recent studies show that protection against the virus may decrease over time. This reduction in protection has led the CDC to recommend certain groups get a booster shot at least 6 months after completing their initial vaccination series.

Learn more about who is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot.

Related pages:

- Vaccines Work
- Booster Shots
- Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People

Preparing for Your Vaccine

How long do I need to wait after getting a flu vaccine or another vaccine before getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

You can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines, including a flu vaccine, at the same visit. Experience with other vaccines has shown that the way our bodies develop protection, known as an immune response, and possible side effects after getting vaccinated are generally the same when given alone or with other vaccines. Learn more about the timing of other vaccines.

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 because:

- Research has not yet shown how long you are protected from getting COVID-19 again after you recover from COVID-19.
- Vaccination helps protect you even if you've already had COVID-19.

Evidence is emerging that people **get better protection by being fully vaccinated** compared with having had COVID-19. One study showed that unvaccinated people who already had COVID-19 are more than 2 times as likely than fully vaccinated people to get COVID-19 again.

If you were treated for COVID-19 with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you received or if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you or your child has a history of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in adults or children (MIS-A or MIS-C), consider delaying vaccination until you or your child have recovered from being sick and for 90 days after the date of diagnosis of MIS-A or MIS-C. Learn more about the clinical considerations for people with a history of multisystem MIS-C or MIS-A.

Experts are still learning more about how long vaccines protect against COVID-19. CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

Related pages:

- Benefits of Getting Vaccinated
- Preparing for Your COVID-19 Vaccination

Can I get vaccinated against COVID-19 while I am currently sick with COVID-19?

No. People with COVID-19 who have symptoms should wait to be vaccinated until they have recovered from their illness and have met the criteria for discontinuing isolation; those without symptoms should also wait until they meet

the criteria before getting vaccinated. This guidance also applies to people who get COVID-19 before getting their second dose of vaccine.

People who have had a known COVID-19 exposure should not seek vaccination until their quarantine period has ended to avoid potentially exposing healthcare personnel and others during the vaccination visit. This recommendation also applies to people with a known COVID-19 exposure who have received their first dose of an mRNA vaccine but not their second.

Related pages:

- When to Quarantine
- Ending Home Isolation

Can I choose which COVID-19 vaccine I get?

Yes. All currently authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and CDC does not recommend one vaccine over another. The most important decision is to get a COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible. Widespread vaccination is a critical tool to help stop the pandemic.

People should be aware that a risk of a rare condition called thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) has been reported following vaccination with the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine. TTS is a serious condition that involves blood clots with low platelet counts. This problem is rare, and most reports were in women between 18 and 49 years old. For women 50 years and older and men of any age, this problem is even more rare. There are other COVID-19 vaccine options available for which this risk has not been seen (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna).

Learn more about your COVID-19 vaccination, including how to find a vaccination location, what to expect at your appointment, and more.

Related page:

- Your Vaccination
- Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines
- Ensuring COVID-19 Vaccines Work

After Your Vaccine

How can I get a new COVID-19 vaccination card?

If you need a new vaccination card, contact the vaccination provider site where you received your vaccine. Your provider should give you a new card with up-to-date information about the vaccinations you have received.

If the location where you received your COVID-19 vaccine is no longer operating, contact your state or local health department's immunization information system (IIS) for assistance.

CDC does **not** maintain vaccination records or determine how vaccination records are used, and CDC does **not** provide the CDC-labeled, white COVID-19 vaccination record card to people. These cards are distributed to vaccination providers by state and local health departments. Please contact your state or local health department if you have additional questions about vaccination cards or vaccination records.

Related page:

- Getting Your COVID-19 Vaccine

Do I need to wear a mask and avoid close contact with others if I am fully vaccinated?

After you are fully vaccinated for COVID-19, take these steps to protect yourself and others:

- In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings.
- If you are in an area with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and when you are in close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.
- If you have a condition or taking medications that weaken your immune system, you may not be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated. You should continue to take all precautions recommended for unvaccinated people, including wearing a well-fitted mask, until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.
- If you are fully vaccinated, to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission.

I was fully vaccinated in another country. How do I transfer my proof of vaccination from that country to get a proof of vaccination card in the United States?

CDC does **not** keep vaccination records or determine how vaccination records are used. To update your records with vaccines you received while outside of the United States, you may:

- Contact the immunization information system (IIS) in your state. You can find state IIS information on the CDC website.
- Contact your healthcare provider or your local or state immunization program through your state's health department.

The CDC-labeled white COVID-19 Vaccination Record Cards are only issued to people vaccinated in the United States. CDC recommends you keep your documentation of being vaccinated in the other country as proof of vaccination. CDC also recommends checking with your primary care provider or state health department for options to document your vaccination status domestically.

How do I know if I've been fully vaccinated if I was vaccinated in another country?

If you have received all recommended doses of a COVID-19 vaccine that has been authorized or approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or is listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization (WHO), then you are considered to be fully vaccinated. This currently includes the following vaccines:

- **Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine** – FDA-authorized, (labeled as COMIRNATY in European Union), 2 doses, for adolescents 12 -15 years old
- **Pfizer-BioNTech (COMIRNATY) COVID-19 Vaccine** – FDA-approved, 2 doses, for persons 16 years and older
- **Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine** – FDA-authorized, 2 doses, for persons 18 years and older
- **Johnson and Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine** – FDA-authorized, (labeled as Janssen-Cilag in European Union), 1 dose, for persons 18 years and older
- **AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine** – WHO-listed, (labeled as COVISHIELD in Canada and others, labeled as AstraZeneca/SKBio in Republic of Korea), 2 doses, for persons 18 years and older
- **Sinopharm BIBP COVID-19 Vaccine** – WHO-listed, 2 doses, for persons 18 years and older
- **Sinovac-CoronaVac COVID-19 Vaccine** – WHO-listed, 2 doses, for persons 18 years and older

If you received a COVID-19 vaccine that is **not** authorized or approved by FDA or listed for emergency use by WHO, you may start over with an FDA-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine. Please note that no data are available on the safety or effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination after receiving a non-FDA-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine. Wait at least 28 days after you received the last dose of the non-FDA-authorized or approved vaccine before receiving an FDA-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine.

Answers to more questions about:

- Healthcare Professionals and COVID-19 Vaccines
- Vaccines.gov
- Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS)
- V-safe after Vaccination Health Checker

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