



## COVID-19

# Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Updated Mar. 4, 2022

## Find a Vaccine

Vaccines are widely available. In many cases, you do not need an appointment.

- The federal government is providing COVID-19 vaccines [free of charge](#) to everyone ages 5 years and older living in the United States, regardless of their immigration or health insurance status.
- Most people in the United States live within 5 miles of a COVID-19 vaccination location.

**Find a COVID-19 vaccine or booster:** Search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you.

## Get Vaccinated Even If You Had COVID-19 and Think You are Immune

You should get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you already had COVID-19. No currently available test can reliably determine if you are protected after being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine after you recover from infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 provides added protection to your immune system. People who already had COVID-19 and do not get vaccinated after their recovery are more likely to get COVID-19 again than those who get vaccinated after their recovery.

## Routine Medical Procedures and Screenings

Most routine medical procedures and screenings can be performed before or after COVID-19 vaccination. However, if you are due for a mammogram, ask your doctor about when you should get a vaccine. Some experts recommend getting your mammogram before being vaccinated or waiting four to six weeks after getting your shot. People who have received a COVID-19 vaccine can have swelling in the lymph nodes (lymphadenopathy) in the underarm near where they got the shot. This is more common after booster or additional doses than after the primary vaccination series. It is possible that this swelling could cause a false reading on a mammogram.

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about getting vaccinated before or after any routine medical procedures or screenings.

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Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about getting vaccinated before or after any routine medical procedures or screenings.

## Considerations for Taking Medication before Getting Vaccinated

It is not recommended you take over-the-counter medicine (such as ibuprofen, aspirin, or acetaminophen) before vaccination for the purpose of trying to prevent vaccine-related side effects. It is not known how these medications might affect how well the vaccine works. If you take these medications regularly for other reasons, you should keep taking them before you get vaccinated. It is also not recommended to take antihistamines before getting a COVID-19 vaccine to try to prevent allergic reactions.

Learn more about medications to relieve [post-vaccination side effects](#).

For most people, it is not recommended to avoid, discontinue, or delay medications that you are routinely taking for prevention or treatment of other medical conditions around the time of COVID-19 vaccination.

If you are taking medications that suppress the immune system, you should talk to your healthcare provider about what is currently known and not known about the effectiveness of getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Ask about the best timing for receiving a vaccine. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines for moderately to severely immunocompromised people](#).

Most people who take medication can get a COVID-19 vaccine. Taking one of the following medications is not, on its own, a reason to avoid getting your COVID-19 vaccination:

- Over-the-counter medications (non-prescription)
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (naproxen, ibuprofen, aspirin, etc.)
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol, etc.)
- Biologics or biologic response modifiers that treat autoimmune diseases
- Chemotherapy or other cancer treatment medications
- Antiviral medication
- Antibiotics
- Statins
- Blood pressure medications/antihypertensives (amlodipine, lisinopril, etc.)
- Diuretics
- Thyroid medications
- Antidepressants
- Metformin
- Diabetic medications
- Insulin
- Steroids (prednisone, etc.)

This is not a complete list. It is meant to provide some examples of common medications. Taking any of these medications will not make COVID-19 vaccination harmful or dangerous.

If you have questions about medications that you are taking, talk to your healthcare professional or your vaccination provider.

## At the Vaccination Site

Before you arrive, contact the site where you will be vaccinated or review your appointment confirmation email for details about your vaccination appointment.

- When getting a vaccine, you or your child *and* your healthcare provider will need to wear masks that cover your nose and mouth. Stay 6 feet away from others while inside and in lines. Learn more about [protecting yourself when going to get your COVID-19 vaccine](#).
- You should receive a paper or electronic version of a fact sheet that tells you more about the specific COVID-19 vaccine you or your child received. Each approved and authorized COVID-19 vaccine has its own fact sheet that contains information to help you understand the risks and benefits of receiving that specific vaccine. Learn more about [different COVID-19 vaccines](#).
- After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, you or your child should be monitored on site for at least 15 minutes. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines and rare severe allergic reactions](#).



Watch Video: [What to Expect at Your COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment \[00:00:48\]](#)

## People Who Should Wait to Get Vaccinated

### People who are in quarantine

If you are not vaccinated and were exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should **wait until your quarantine is over** to avoid getting others sick while you get your vaccine. However, you may be able to get a vaccine while in quarantine if you

- Are at risk for multiple exposures (like living in shared housing),
- Don't have any symptoms of COVID-19, and
- Take precautions to prevent spreading COVID-19.

### People who are in isolation

If you currently have COVID-19, you should **wait to get your vaccine** until

- Your symptoms are gone (if you had symptoms) and
- [Criteria](#) to discontinue isolation have been met.

### People who have had multisystem inflammatory syndrome

If you or your child have a history of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in adults or children ([MIS-A](#) or [MIS-C](#)), **consider delaying vaccination** until

- You have recovered from being sick and
- It has been 90 days since the date of diagnosis of MIS-A or MIS-C.

Learn more about the [clinical considerations](#) for people with a history of MIS-A or MIS-C.

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 were treated for COVID-19 with [monoclonal antibodies](#) or [convalescent plasma](#) while sick with COVID-19, **you do not need to wait before getting a COVID-19 vaccine**.

## After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

- After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, you or your child should be monitored on site for at least 15 minutes. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines and rare severe allergic reactions](#).
- People may experience [side effects](#) after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Get helpful tips on [how to reduce any pain or discomfort](#).
- Ask your vaccination provider about getting started with [v-safe](#), a free, smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccination. Parents and guardians can enroll children (ages 5 years and older) or dependents in v-safe and complete health check-ins on their behalf after COVID-19 vaccination. [Register](#) or [sign into v-safe](#). Learn more about [v-safe](#).
- If you are getting a COVID-19 vaccine that requires two doses, be sure to schedule an appointment for [your second shot](#).

[▶ Watch Video: Use v-safe to tell CDC how you're feeling after COVID-19 vaccination \[00:00:34\]](#)

## Your CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Card

At the first vaccination appointment, you will get a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card that tells you which COVID-19 vaccine you or your child received, the date you or your child received it, and where you or your child received it.

- Keep this CDC COVID-19 vaccination card for future use. Consider taking a picture of the card after your or your child's vaccination appointment as a backup copy.

Learn more about getting a [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card](#).

## Getting Additional Shots

If you received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine ([Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) or [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#)), you need a second shot of the same vaccine to complete the primary series. You should get your second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccine provider or your doctor tells you [not to get it](#).

It takes time for the body to [build protection after any vaccination](#). Most people are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after the second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or the single-dose J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.

Many people who are [moderately or severely immunocompromised](#) may need an additional (third) dose to complete their primary vaccine series. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines for people who are moderately or severely compromised](#).



Learn about [COVID-19 vaccine booster shots](#).

## Booster Shot

Everyone ages 12 years and older should get a booster after completing their primary series in order to [stay up to date](#) on their COVID-19 vaccines. A booster shot enhances or restores protection against COVID-19, which may have decreased over time.

Learn when you are eligible for a [booster](#).

Last Updated Mar. 4, 2022