Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination

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Below are answers to commonly asked questions about COVID-19 vaccination.

Have more questions? Visit How to Protect Yourself and Others and FAQs about COVID-19.

Safety

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

Although COVID-19 vaccines were developed quickly, research and development on vaccines like these have been underway for decades. All vaccine development steps were taken to ensure COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness, including:

- **Clinical Trials** – All vaccines in the United States must go through three phases of clinical trials to ensure they are safe and effective. The 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) reviews data from clinical trials. FDA has determined three COVID-19 vaccines meet FDA's standards and has granted those vaccines Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) or full FDA approval.
- **Tracking Safety Using Vaccine Monitoring Systems** – Like every other vaccine approved for use in the United States, COVID-19 vaccines continue to be monitored for safety and effectiveness. Hundreds of millions of people in the United States have safely received COVID-19 vaccines. CDC and FDA continue to provide updated information on the safety of U.S. authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccines using data from several monitoring systems.

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, and nanowire semiconductors. **None** of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized or approved in the United States contain any live virus.

To learn more about the ingredients in authorized or approved 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 people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or trying to get pregnant now, as well as people who might become pregnant in the future. People with COVID-19 during pregnancy are more likely to deliver a preterm (earlier than 37 weeks) or stillborn infant and may also be more likely to have other pregnancy complications.

COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy helps

- Prevent severe illness and death in people who are pregnant
- Protect babies younger than 6 months old from hospitalization caused by COVID-19

Learn more about vaccination considerations and the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccinations 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 system 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.

Why should my child get vaccinated against COVID-19?

Vaccinating children ages 5 years and older can help protect them from getting COVID-19, spreading the virus to others, and getting sick if they do get infected. While COVID-19 tends to be milder in children than adults, it can make children very sick, require hospitalization, and some children have even died. Children with underlying medical conditions are more at risk for severe illness compared to children without underlying medical conditions.

Getting your child vaccinated helps to protect your child and your family, including siblings who are not eligible for vaccination and family members who may be at risk of getting very sick if infected. Vaccination is now recommended for everyone ages 5 years and older. Currently, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is the only one available to children ages 5 years and older.

COVID-19 vaccines have been used under the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. Scientists have conducted clinical trials with thousands of children, and the results show that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.

Your child cannot get COVID-19 from any COVID-19 vaccine, and there is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems.

Your child may have some side effects, which are similar to those seen with other routine vaccines and are a normal sign that their body is building protection. These side effects may affect their ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Some people have no side effects and severe allergic reactions are very rare.

Related pages:

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

Getting Your Vaccine

Am I required to get vaccinated for work?

An employer may require that their workers be vaccinated. **Check directly with your employer** to see if they have any vaccination requirements or rules that apply to you.

Do I need a COVID-19 vaccine booster?

Yes. The protection COVID-19 vaccines provide decreases over time, especially for certain groups of people. Due to this, CDC recommends everyone ages 12 and older get a booster for the best protection against COVID-19.

Learn more about COVID-19 booster recommendations, including recommendations for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will I need to get to complete my primary series?

The number of vaccine doses you need to complete your primary series depends on which vaccine you receive.

- Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine 3–8* weeks apart, or
- Two doses of Moderna vaccine 4–8* weeks apart, or
- One dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen) vaccine.

*Talk to your healthcare or vaccine provider about the timing for the second dose in your primary series. You should **not** get the second dose early.

People who are **moderately or severely immunocompromised** may have a different immune response following COVID-19 vaccination. Please see specific COVID-19 vaccination guidance for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

If I didn't get my second dose of a 2-dose COVID-19 vaccine within the recommended time, do I need to start over?

No. If you receive your second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at any time after the recommended date, you do not have to restart the vaccine series. This guidance might be updated as more information becomes available.

Learn more about staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines.

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

Scientists are monitoring how long COVID-19 vaccine protection lasts. COVID-19 vaccines work well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death. However, public health experts are seeing decreases in the protection COVID-19 vaccines provide over time, especially for certain groups of people. Due to this, CDC recommends that everyone ages 12 and older get a booster for the best protection against COVID-19. Learn more about COVID-19 booster recommendations, including recommendations for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

CDC continues to review evidence and updates guidance as new information becomes available.

Preparing for Your Vaccine

Why should I get vaccinated if I might get COVID-19 anyway?

COVID-19 vaccination significantly lowers your risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death if you get infected. Compared to people who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations, **unvaccinated people are** more likely to get COVID-19, much more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19, and much more likely to die from COVID-19.

Like all vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines are not 100% effective at preventing infection. Some people who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations will get COVID-19 breakthrough infection. However, staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations means that you are less likely to have a breakthrough infection and, if you do get sick, you are less likely to get severely ill or die. Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccination also means you are less likely to spread the disease to others and increases your protection against new variants of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

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

You should get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you already had COVID-19.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine after you recover from COVID-19 infection 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.

All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States are effective at preventing COVID-19. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine gives most people a high level of protection against COVID-19, even in people who have already been sick with COVID-19..

No currently available test can reliably determine if a person is protected from infection.

Related pages:

- Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine
- Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

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?

Currently, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is the only COVID-19 vaccine available to children ages 5 through 17 years old. For adults ages 18 years and older, the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) are preferred over Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine. All COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized and recommended for use in the U.S. are safe and effective. However, mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are preferred based on an updated risk-benefit analysis.

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 rare but serious condition that involves blood clots in large blood vessels and low platelets (blood cells that help form clots). In some instances, TTS following vaccination has been fatal. Cases of TTS have been reported in both men and women and in a wide age range of people 18 years and older. While all ages and sexes are at risk for TTS, women ages 30-49 have the highest risk with about 1 case occurring per 100,000 doses administered. This risk has **not** been seen in recipients of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines.

Receiving any COVID-19 vaccine is better than being unvaccinated. Widespread vaccination is a critical tool to help stop the pandemic.

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 CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card?

If you have lost your CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card or don't have a copy of it, contact your vaccination provider directly to request a new vaccination card. They may be able to reissue a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card.

- If you cannot contact your vaccination provider directly or your vaccination provider cannot reissue a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card, contact your state health department's immunization information system (IIS). Your state's IIS cannot issue you a vaccination card, but they can provide a digital or paper copy of your full vaccination record, including your COVID-19 vaccinations.
- If you need another COVID-19 vaccine dose and are unable to get a copy of your vaccination card or vaccination record, talk to a vaccination provider to learn about your possible options.

- Some vaccination providers and health departments may offer you access to a QR code or digital copy of your CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card in addition to giving you a physical card. Contact your vaccination provider or local health department to learn if you can get a digital copy of your card.

CDC does **not** provide the white CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card to people and does **not** maintain vaccination records. CDC distributes the white CDC COVID-19 Vaccination cards to vaccination providers and only a vaccination provider can give you this card.

Related page:

- Getting Your CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record and Vaccination Card

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

Generally, if you are up to date on your COVID-19 vaccinations, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings. Check your local COVID-19 Community Level for recommendations on when to wear a mask indoors and additional precautions you can take to protect yourself from COVID-19. If you are immunocompromised or more likely to get very sick from COVID-19, learn more about how to protect yourself.

Should I wear a mask if I have a weak immune system?

If you have a condition or are taking medications that weaken your immune system, your immune response to COVID-19 vaccination may not be as strong as in people who are not immunocompromised. Check your county's COVID-19 Community Level for recommendations on whether you should wear a mask and additional actions you can take to protect yourself from COVID-19. Keep in mind that you may choose to wear a mask at any time based on your own level of comfort and personal risk.

Learn more about COVID-19 vaccinations for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

I was 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?

The CDC white COVID-19 Vaccination 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 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.
- Contact your healthcare provider or your local or state immunization program through your state's health department.

Learn more about COVID-19 vaccination records and vaccination cards.

Am I considered fully vaccinated if I was vaccinated in another country?

You are considered fully vaccinated if you did one of the following:

- Received one dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine authorized or approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization (WHO)

- Received two doses (or any combination*) of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series authorized or approved by FDA or listed for emergency use by WHO

**CDC does not recommend mixing different COVID-19 vaccines for the primary series but is aware that this is increasingly common in many countries outside of the United States. Therefore, for the interpretation of vaccination records, people who received a mixed primary series are considered fully vaccinated.*

If you received a COVID-19 vaccine **not** authorized nor approved by FDA or listed for emergency use by WHO, you should receive an FDA-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine. Wait at least 28 days after your last COVID-19 vaccination before starting over with an FDA-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine. Visit the COVID-19 Vaccine Interim Clinical Considerations for more information.

Once you are fully vaccinated, learn how to stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines for the best protection.

Answers to more questions about:

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

Related Pages

- FAQs about Vaccination in Children
- Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines

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