Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine: Overview and Safety

Updated June 10, 2022

Recommended in Some Situations for People 18 Years and Older

In most situations, **Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are preferred** over Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine. J&J/Janssen should only be considered in some cases. J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine cannot be used as a 2nd booster dose.

Primary Series: 1 dose of J&J/Janssen. People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised (have a weakened immune system) should get a 2nd dose of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna at least 4 weeks after their 1st dose in the primary series.

Boosters: People who received a J&J/Janssen primary series should get a booster. Only some people can get a 2nd booster dose. Use CDC’s COVID-19 booster tool to learn if and when you can get boosters to stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines.

Learn about the recommended timing between the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine and boosters for:

Ages 18 and Older | Immunocompromised

General Information

Manufacturer: Janssen Pharmaceuticals Companies of Johnson & Johnson

Does NOT Contain: Eggs, preservatives, latex, or metals
View full list of ingredients

Type of Vaccine: Viral Vector

Name: JNJ-78436735

How Given: Shot in the muscle of the upper arm

When to Consider J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine

In most situations, Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are preferred over the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for primary and booster vaccination due to the risk of serious adverse events. Vaccine recipients must be informed of the risks and benefits of J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccination. The J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine may be considered in some situations, including for persons who:

- Had a severe reaction after an mRNA vaccine dose or who have a severe allergy to an ingredient of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines).
- Would otherwise remain unvaccinated for COVID-19 due to limited access to Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA

COVID-19 vaccines).

- Wants to get the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine despite the safety concerns.

Learn more about the considerations for J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.

Safety Data Summary

In most situations, Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are preferred over the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for primary and booster vaccination due to the risk of serious adverse events.

There is a plausible causal relationship between J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine and a rare and serious adverse event—blood clots with low platelets (thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome, or TTS). It occurs at a rate of about 3.83 cases per million Janssen doses and has resulted in deaths.

> Learn more about vaccine safety monitoring after a vaccine is authorized or approved for use.

How Well the Vaccine Works

- The J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine was 66.3% effective in clinical trials at preventing laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection in people who received the vaccine and had no evidence of being previously infected. People had the most protection 2 weeks after getting vaccinated.
- In the clinical trials, the vaccine had high efficacy at preventing hospitalization and death in people who did get sick.

> Learn more about demographic information for people who participated in the trials [PDF – 62 pages] .

Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Ingredients

The J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine contains a piece of a modified virus that is not the virus that causes COVID-19. This modified virus is called the vector virus. The vector virus cannot reproduce itself, so it cannot cause COVID-19. This vector virus gives instructions to cells in the body to create an immune response. This response helps protect you from getting sick with COVID-19 in the future. After the body produces an immune response, it gets rid of all of the vaccine ingredients just as it would discard any information that cells no longer need. This process is a part of normal body functioning.

All COVID-19 vaccines are manufactured with as few ingredients as possible and with only the necessary amounts of each ingredient. Nearly all of the ingredients in COVID-19 vaccines are also the ingredients in many foods – fats, sugars, and salts. Each ingredient in the vaccine serves a specific purpose as seen in the table below.

Full list of ingredients

The J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine contains the following ingredients:

Type of Ingredient	Ingredient	Purpose
A harmless version of a virus unrelated to the COVID-19 virus	• Recombinant, replication-incompetent Ad26 vector, encoding a stabilized variant of the SARS-CoV-2 Spike (S) protein	Provides instructions the body uses to build a harmless piece of a protein from the virus that causes COVID-19. This protein causes an immune response that helps protect the body from getting sick with COVID-19 in the future.

Sugars, salts, acid, and acid stabilizer	• Polysorbate-80 • 2-hydroxypropyl-β-cyclodextrin • Trisodium citrate dihydrate • Sodium chloride (basic table salt) • Citric acid monohydrate (closely related to lemon juice) • Ethanol (a type of alcohol)	Work together to help keep the vaccine molecules stable while the vaccine is manufactured, shipped, and stored until it is ready to be given to a vaccine recipient.

Ingredients that are NOT used in COVID-19 vaccines

The above table lists ALL ingredients in the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. There are NO ingredients in this vaccine beyond what is listed in that table. The J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine has:

- **No preservatives** like thimerosal or mercury or any other preservatives.
- **No antibiotics** like sulfonamide or any other antibiotics.
- **No medicines or therapeutics** like ivermectin or any other medications.
- **No tissues** like aborted fetal cells, gelatin, or any materials from any animal.
- **No food proteins** like eggs or egg products, gluten, peanuts, tree nuts, nut products, or any nut byproducts (COVID-19 vaccines are not manufactured in facilities that produce food products).
- **No metals** like iron, nickel, cobalt, titanium, rare earth alloys, or any manufactured products like microelectronics, electrodes, carbon nanotubes or other nanostructures, or nanowire semiconductors.
- **No latex**. The vial stoppers used to hold the vaccine also do not contain latex.

Related Pages

› Possible Side Effects

› Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines

› Benefits of Getting Vaccinated

› How Vaccines Work

› Viral Vector Vaccines

For Healthcare Workers

Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine: General information, schedule, and administration overview.

Resources

Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers [242 KB, 7 pages]

Safety and Reactogenicity Data

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