

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): COVID-19 Vaccine Basics

What is happening with COVID-19 vaccines?

COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson) have been approved or authorized by the FDA in the U.S. Anyone aged 5 and older can get Pfizer, anyone aged 18 and older can get the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson.

Why is the vaccine important?

Vaccines work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Getting vaccinated helps protect you from getting very sick or dying from COVID-19.



How did the vaccines get approved so quickly?

The federal government used taxpayer money to help scientists make the vaccines as soon as possible. The mRNA technology used in the vaccines was already being studied for years. The vaccines are still going through the same rigorous testing, review and approval process to make sure they are safe and effective (work against COVID-19).

Quick facts about the vaccine

- The COVID-19 vaccine does not contain live viruses and cannot give you COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is free for you.
- People who have already had COVID-19 should still get the vaccine.
- You do not need to quarantine or miss work to get the vaccine.
- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are recommended for most people over the J&J.
- Boosters are necessary to maintain and improve protection from the vaccine.

Can pregnant people get the vaccine?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines are safe and recommended for pregnant and breastfeeding people.

Is one vaccine better than the others?

For most people, the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines are recommended over the J&J because they are more effective and have less serious side effects.

What are the side effects?

The most common side effects are pain and swelling in the arm where you got the shot. You may have fever, chills, tiredness, and headache. These side effects should go away in a few days.

Can I still get sick if I'm vaccinated?

Yes. Full vaccination makes you less likely to get COVID, but breakthrough cases can happen. The vaccine will help you to be less at risk for death and not be as sick if you do get COVID.

Do I need a booster?

[Boosters are recommended to increase your protection.](#) Get a booster:

- 6 months after the Moderna, 5 months after the Pfizer, 2 months after the J&J
- Everyone 12 and older can get a booster in the U.S.

Can I stop wearing a mask and socially distancing after I get vaccinated?

Even if you are vaccinated, masks are important to stop the pandemic. Variants of COVID-19 are spreading quickly. The CDC recommends wearing a mask indoors if the COVID-19 rates in your area are high. You must still wear a mask where required by laws, rules, and regulations, including businesses and workplaces.

[Check the CDC website for updated guidelines.](#)