



COVID-19 vaccinations: What you need to know

Medical evidence shows that getting a COVID-19 vaccination can help keep you, your family, your community, and your country healthy and safe. Since the prioritization and distribution of vaccine doses varies by state and local communities, your best source of current information is your local or state health department. By getting vaccinated when you're eligible, you can act to help end the damage to the economy, prevent more illnesses and deaths in America, and eliminate and eradicate COVID-19.

Where to get vaccinated

The federal government is sending vaccine doses to states for distribution and has provided general guidance on priority populations to receive the vaccine. States make the final decision on prioritization. Distribution will continue in phases through the spring and into summer. Check with your local or state health department for when you might be eligible and where you can get vaccinated.

About getting vaccinated

It's worth noting, you can't get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Some COVID-19 vaccinations require two shots. Most providers are scheduling the

second vaccination while administering the first and are providing a reminder card to the patient.

The majority of people will experience no side effects other than a sore arm. About 10% may have flu-like symptoms for a couple of days as the body develops antibodies. Some people have reported more severe side effects after the second shot. This is normal and generally not cause for alarm. A small number of people have had a very serious reaction that is treatable.

Currently anyone receiving a vaccine is asked to stick around for a 15- to 30-minute observation period just to be safe.

It takes a few weeks for your body to build up immunity after vaccination, so keep wearing a

mask when you're away from home, avoid crowded spaces, wash hands regularly and keep your distance from others outside your home. In fact, it's best to keep up with these safety protocols until the majority in your community has been vaccinated. It is not yet known if you can transmit the virus after vaccination.

It won't cost you anything to get vaccinated. The federal government is buying enough vaccine doses to immunize every American. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services or private insurance pays for administration.

Who should get vaccinated

Vaccination is recommended for all adults unless they have a health condition that makes it unsafe to receive the vaccine. If in doubt, contact your doctor.

In addition, if you have allergies, are pregnant or nursing, or are immunocompromised, you should talk with your doctor before getting vaccinated to make sure the proper safety protocols are in place.

As of February 2021, there is no vaccine approved for children under age 16.

You should get vaccinated even if you've had COVID-19

If it's been more than 90 days since you've had COVID-19, vaccination is recommended. We don't know how long immunity lasts.

Vaccine safety

Vaccines teach our bodies to fight the virus by creating antibodies.

Vaccines undergo rigorous clinical trials to prove safety and effectiveness before they receive permission from the Food and Drug

Administration (FDA) for broad distribution. Clinical trials involve tens of thousands of people who volunteer to receive the vaccine. The FDA grants emergency use authorization only if independent analysis confirms the vaccines are safe and effective.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have an effectiveness rate of more than 95%. While these vaccines are new, the technology behind them has been studied for years.

The vaccine does not contain the virus or inactivated virus. You cannot get COVID-19 from the COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccines in development

Many vaccines have been developed by scientists around the world and are undergoing testing and status changes all the time. For the most up-to-date information, visit the [New York Times vaccine tracker](#) online or the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

How to know if information can be trusted

False claims about the COVID-19 vaccine have spread rapidly across social media, so check your information sources. You can't go wrong with your state or local health department, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the FDA.

Staying safe is a team sport

Even after your vaccination, keep wearing a mask, avoiding crowded spaces, washing hands, and physical distancing. We want to keep everyone in our community safe until we get through this. And then we can reopen our communities and get back to a normal social lifestyle that we all enjoy.

