

# Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19

5/13/2021

There are currently three vaccines to help stop the spread of COVID-19 disease. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is for people ages 12 and older. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines are for people ages 18 and older. It is your decision whether to get the vaccine.

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## Before getting your vaccine

### General information

- **How it's made:** The COVID-19 vaccines use various technologies to tell the body how to recognize the virus that causes COVID-19 and defend itself against it. The vaccines do not contain live virus. You cannot get COVID-19 from any of the vaccines.
- **Doses:** For the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, you will need two doses of vaccine to be protected against COVID-19. Both doses must be from the same product. You will only need one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. When you get your vaccine, you will be told if you need to come back for a second dose.
- **Documentation:** You should get a card that shows the date you got your first vaccination. An appointment date can be written on the card if you need to come back for a second dose.
  - Keep the card in your wallet or purse and bring it with you if you need to come back for a second dose. If you have a cell phone, you can take a picture of the card in case you misplace it.
- **Timeline:** Pfizer vaccine doses are given 21 days (three weeks) apart. Moderna vaccine doses are given 28 days (one month) apart. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is only one dose.
  - The second dose is very important to get. It is OK if the timing between the two doses is not exact. If you miss the exact timing between doses, just try to get your second dose as soon as you can.

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## Getting your vaccine

### What to expect

- **COVID-19 status:** If you are sick with COVID-19, or think you might have COVID-19, wait until you are better and have been cleared to come out of isolation before you get your COVID-19 vaccination.
- **Education:** Before you get vaccinated you should receive a fact sheet. If you have any questions about the vaccine, ask any of the staff at the clinic.

- **Agreement:** Some clinics may ask you to sign your name on a form that says that you received the fact sheet and you agree to receive the vaccine.
- **Screening:** You will be asked a few health questions to make sure it is okay for you to receive the vaccine.
  - Do not get a COVID-19 vaccination if you have had an allergic reaction to any of the vaccine's ingredients.
  - If you get a vaccine that requires a second dose, do not get a second dose if you had a serious allergic reaction to the first dose. A serious reaction is one that made you go to the emergency room.
- **Safety:** Vaccination clinics will require you to wear a mask and stay at least 6 feet away from others, except the person giving the vaccination.

## Cost

The vaccine will be free to everyone, regardless of your immigration or insurance status. Some vaccination clinics may ask for medical insurance information so they can get reimbursed from the insurance company. You should not receive a bill. If you do not have insurance, you can still get vaccinated.

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## After getting your vaccine

### Common side effects

People may have side effects from the vaccine. Sometimes these side effects may stop you from doing your normal activities for a couple days.

Common side effects happen within a day or two after vaccination and can include:

- Pain where you received the vaccine
- Feeling tired
- Headache
- Achy muscles and joints
- Chills
- Fever
- Swelling under your arm pits

Ask your doctor about taking over-the-counter medicines for any pain or fever. These side effects should go away within one to two days. If you develop something of concern, call your doctor.

If your arm hurts where you got the shot, place a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area. Using your arm or exercising it also helps. Drink plenty of fluids if you have a fever.

Your doctor will tell you about v-safe, a smartphone app. It helps you track and report any side effects that you might have. V-safe will also remind you when it is time to get your second dose. Use the v-safe information sheet you got when you were vaccinated to install CDC's v-safe on your smartphone. Find more information at [V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html).

## Serious side effects

A small number of people may have a serious allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine. If this happens, it usually happens 15 to 30 minutes after getting the vaccination. Serious side effects are rare, but you will be asked to wait for 15 to 30 minutes after getting the vaccination to make sure you feel alright. **If you have a severe allergic reaction after you leave the vaccination clinic, call 911, or go to the nearest hospital.**

Signs of a severe reaction include:

- Trouble breathing
- Swelling of your face and throat
- Fast heartbeat
- Bad rash all over your body
- Feeling dizzy and weak





## Blood clotting issues

There is a risk of a rare but serious condition involving blood clots and low platelets in people after receiving the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. **This risk is very low.** Most people who developed this blood clotting issue were adult women younger than 50 years old. For women 50 years and older and men of all ages, this adverse event is even more rare. This condition is treatable. For three weeks after receiving the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, contact your health care provider if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Leg swelling
- Abdominal/stomach pain that doesn't go away
- Severe headaches or headaches that won't go away
- Blurred vision
- Easy bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the site of the injection

## Keep you and your loved ones safe

After you receive your final dose of vaccine (second dose in a two-dose series or first dose in a one-dose series), it takes two weeks for your body to build up protection. After those two weeks, you are considered fully vaccinated. It is important to continue to follow current public health guidance to reduce the spread of COVID-19. When recommended:

 Wear a mask.  Wash your hands.  Stay 6 feet from others.  Stay home if you feel sick.



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