

# COVID-19 VACCINES

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### SAFETY/SIDE EFFECTS

#### What are benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

Source: Mayo Clinic

- If you get COVID-19, you could become very sick. Some people die. A vaccine keeps you from getting sick.
- If you get COVID-19, you might give it to people around you. The vaccine MAY keep you from giving COVID-19 to others. Scientists are studying this.

#### Is the vaccine safe?

Source: Public Health Communications Collaborative

The vaccine has been tested in thousands of people with strict rules. It has been safe so far. Scientists are watching for reactions.

#### Wasn't the vaccine made too fast?

Source: Johns Hopkins University & Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center

It usually takes several years for a vaccine to be ready to give to large groups of people. The COVID-19 vaccine is ready sooner because:

- Two stages of the trial were combined.
- Since so many people in community have COVID-19, it was easier to see if the vaccine helped those who received it.
- The U.S. government and others invested lots of money to produce vaccines while the trial was going on, so those that worked could be given sooner.

#### What kind of reaction will I have to the vaccine?

Source: Public Health Communications Collaborative

Most people don't have a reaction to the vaccine. If they do, it's minor, like a sore arm or being tired.

#### How long after I get vaccinated will I have a reaction?

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Allergic reactions and feelings of light-headedness and/or fainting typically happen within 15 minutes of vaccination. So you may be watched for 15 minutes after getting the shot. Side effects like sore arm, tiredness and headache usually happen one to three days after vaccination.

## How much testing has there been on people of color?

Source: Public Health Communications Collaborative and Ohio Department of Health

The vaccine needs to be safe for all people who get it. The share of people of color in the trials done so far was close to the share of people of color in the whole United States.

## Who can't get the vaccine?

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians

- Children and teens under age 16. No vaccines have yet been approved for people under 16.
- Anyone who has a fever or other symptoms should wait to get the vaccine until they feel better.
- People who have had a serious reaction to a shot in the past or know they are allergic to an ingredient in the vaccine.
- Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or people who are immunocompromised should talk with their health care provider about the vaccine.

## SUPPLY/DEMAND

### When will the vaccine become available to the general public (i.e., after front line workers, high risk populations etc. have been vaccinated)?

Source: Public Health Communications Collaborative

Right now, there is not enough vaccine for everyone who needs it. The first doses are going to the people who have the highest risk of getting sick or who will have more complications if they get COVID-19. As more vaccine becomes available, more groups will be able to get it.

## What can I do to protect myself until I can get COVID-19 vaccine?

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Do the following to protect yourself:

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Avoid crowds.
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces.
- Wash your hands often.

## If I've already had COVID-19 and gotten better, do I need vaccine?

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Yes. It is possible to get COVID-19 again. Some people may need to wait 90 days after their illness to get a vaccine. Talk to your health care provider if you are unsure.

## **If I receive a first vaccine dose, will I be able to get the second dose?**

*Source: Public Health Communications Collaborative*

The two vaccines available are most effective with two doses. Experts are working to make sure that people get both doses in the advised timeframe.

## **Will we need to get the vaccine yearly like the flu vaccine or just once?**

*Source: Johns Hopkins Medicine*

Experts aren't sure yet.

## HOW VACCINE WORKS

### **How will a COVID-19 vaccine work in my body?**

*Source: Washington State Department of Health*

The COVID-19 vaccine teaches your immune system to recognize the coronavirus. When you get the vaccine, your immune system makes antibodies ("fighter cells") that stay in your blood and protect you in case you are infected with the virus. You get protected against the disease without having to get sick.

When enough people in the community can fight off the coronavirus, it has nowhere to go. This means we can stop the spread quicker and get a little closer to ending this pandemic.

### **Do you have to have U.S. citizenship or permanent residency to receive the vaccine?**

*Source: Kentucky Department for Public Health*

No, all vaccine sites are open to anyone within the priority groups regardless of country, state or county of residence.

## COST

### **How much will the vaccine cost?**

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Vaccine doses bought with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers can charge an administration fee for giving someone the shot.

## PREGNANCY, BREASTFEEDING AND FERTILITY

### **Can pregnant women get the vaccine?**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Yes, but they should talk to their health care provider first.

### **Can breastfeeding women get the vaccine?**

Source: Tennessee Department of Health

Yes, but they should talk to their health care provider first.

### **Does the COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility?**

Source: Washington State Department of Health

No. This is a myth circulated online by non-scientific sources.

## CHILDREN

### **Is it safe for kids and teenagers to get the COVID vaccines?**

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians

Children and teens under age 16 are not eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Those under age 19 are not eligible to receive the Moderna vaccine. The vaccines have not yet been studied in kids and teens.

### **When will kids and teens be able to get the vaccine?**

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Trials with children as young as 5 are currently underway. Some age groups may be able to be vaccinated by summer 2021.

## AFTER YOU'RE VACCINATED

### **If I get vaccinated, can I stop wearing my mask?**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

No. Experts don't yet know if getting vaccinated for COVID-19 keeps you from spreading the virus to other people, even if you don't get sick yourself.

### **Does getting sick with COVID-19 provide better protection than the vaccine gives?**

Source: American Medical Association

Experts aren't yet sure. They do know that if you get COVID-19, you can become seriously ill and die and you can give it to others. The vaccine is the safer choice.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### **Do I need to be vaccinated for work?**

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

The federal government does not require vaccination. But employers may require it. Check with your employer.

### **Will a vaccine end the COVID-19 pandemic?**

*Source: King County, Washington, Public Health*

Vaccines alone won't end the pandemic right away. At this time, vaccination needs to be used along with other prevention methods, such as hand washing, social distancing and wearing masks.