

## COVID Vaccine FAQs

### **How do the vaccines work?**

When we are vaccinated, the messenger RNA (mRNA) goes within our cells, prompt our bodies to make antibodies, that then recognizes the virus when exposed and attacks the virus to prevent it from going inside the cells – thereby preventing illness.

### **How much will a COVID-10 vaccine cost?**

The federal government has said any coronavirus vaccine will be provided to the American public for free. While the vaccine itself will be provided at no charge, facilities may charge administrative costs associated with providing the vaccine.

### **What happens to my personal information when I sign up to receive the vaccine?**

All facilities providing COVID-19 vaccines must follow strict privacy policies called HIPAA. Your personal information will be protected. Medical providers are required to report every vaccine administered within 24 hours to the California Immunization Registry (CAIR). This site provides de-personalized, demographic information to the California Department of Public Health for data analysis purposes.

### **When were the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines approved?**

#### Pfizer vaccine

- The FDA approved the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for use in individuals age 16 years and older on December 11, 2020.
- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) also recommended the use of the Pfizer vaccine in individuals age 16 years and older on December 12, 2020.

#### Moderna vaccine

- The FDA approved the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for use in individuals age 18 years and older on December 18, 2020.
- ACIP recommended the used of the Moderna vaccine in individuals age 18 years and older on December 19, 2020.

### **How safe are the vaccines that are coming out right now? What are the side-effects?**

COVID-19 vaccines were tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards. Many people were recruited to participate in these trials to see how the vaccines offers protection to people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, as well as those with different medical conditions.

Both this disease and the vaccine are new. We don't know how long protection lasts for those who get infected or those who are vaccinated. What we do know is that COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for a lot of people. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to loved ones who may get very sick. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice.

The most common adverse effects reported so far have been short term (2-3 days) of fatigue, headache, chills, myalgia (muscle pain) or pain at the injection site. Low-grade fever can also occur but more common after the second dose.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html>

### **How can I report any side-effects or adverse reactions I may experience possibly from the vaccine?**

Any adverse events should immediately be reported to your primary care provider or the clinic where you received the vaccine.

CDC and FDA encourage the public to report possible side effects (called adverse events) to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Healthcare providers will be required to report certain adverse events following vaccination to VAERS. This national system collects these data to look for adverse events that are unexpected, appear to happen more often than expected, or have unusual patterns of occurrence. Reports to VAERS help CDC monitor the safety of vaccines. Safety is a top priority.

CDC is also implementing a new smartphone-based tool called v-safe to check-in on people's health after they receive a COVID-19 vaccine. When you receive your vaccine, you should also receive a v-safe information sheet telling you how to enroll in v-safe. If you enroll, you will receive regular text messages directing you to surveys where you can report any problems or adverse reactions you have after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html>

### **Can people decide which vaccine to take?**

Initially, there might not be a much of a choice as vaccine availability and allocation is limited. As the months go by and other vaccine manufacturers receive authorization to distribute the vaccine, our community might have more choice in what vaccine they get.

### **In the two-dose series for the vaccines, can I get one from one manufacturer and the second dose from a different manufacturer (Pfizer and Moderna)?**

No, you must get both vaccine doses from same manufacturer to get full protection from the vaccines. Providers are required to report vaccine administration with 24 hours to the immunization registry (CAIR) which will help prevent this from occurring.

### **What is the difference between the two available vaccines—Pfizer and Moderna?**

Both vaccines use messenger RNA technology, meaning they are made up of similar RNA that then gets made into “spiked proteins” that tells the body the specific antibodies to make to “fight” against the virus. Both vaccines have high levels of efficacy meaning they are highly effective vaccines (when both doses are received) in preventing COVID-19 illness. Some differences in the vaccine include the way it is stored and the length of time between dose 1 and dose 2.

### **Can my boss/employer force me to take the vaccine?**

At this time, there is no Federal or State mandate requiring individuals to receive the COVID-19 vaccines. You should reach out to your employer or Human Resources Department to understand their stance on the vaccine in the workplace.

### **How can I prove that I received the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Every dose of the vaccine that is distributed will come with a COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. This card will provide proof of your initial dose of the vaccine and stand as a reminder to receive your second dose.

### **If the vaccines prevent people from getting “sick” with the coronavirus, can they also prevent people from “carrying” the virus and infecting others?**

In clinical trials, both vaccines have shown high effectiveness in preventing people from getting sick with Covid-19. However, the data hasn’t shown whether the vaccines can prevent people from carrying the virus and infecting others. This is the reason that after getting the COVID-19 vaccine (even after the second dose), you should continue to wear a mask, socially distance, and stay home when ill.

### **If I get a fever as one of the side-effects of the vaccine, should I self-quarantine?**

Staying home when you do not feel well is always the best practice to limit the spread of possible infectious diseases. While you will not get COVID-19 from the vaccine, it is a good idea to stay home until you feel better and any adverse reactions have subsided. Post-vaccination symptoms have usually been mild, occurring 1-3 days after vaccination. You can consider taking Tylenol or ibuprofen for your fever, muscle aches, and other post-vaccination side effects. For pregnant women, please take Tylenol and not ibuprofen.

### **Do I still need to wear a mask and avoid close contact with others if I received two doses of the vaccine?**

Yes. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help

stop this pandemic. These tools include: covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from others.

Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following CDC's recommendations for how to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before deciding to change recommendations on steps everyone should take to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. We will eventually get to a point where these precautions will no longer be recommended, but we need to ensure we have all the information available about the impact the vaccine has on the spread of the virus.

### **Should I get tested for COVID-19 before I get vaccinated for COVID-19?**

No. The CDC does not recommend testing for COVID-19 infection prior to vaccination.

### **Could COVID-19 vaccine be made mandatory?**

No, but we hope that the strong safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines currently available will be strong encouragement for all eligible individuals to take it when offered.

### **When will I be protected from catching COVID-19?**

The vaccine doesn't work right away. After the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, it takes about two weeks for your body's immune system to respond to protect you from getting sick.

### **How long will the COVID-19 vaccine protect me? Will I have to get a COVID-19 shot every year?**

The evidence is still unclear. Scientists are looking into whether "booster" doses are needed every season/year. Right now though, the CDC states that the two-dose series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccines are adequate.

### **Will the COVID-19 vaccine work on the new strains?**

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are still effective against the three currently known virus variants (the ones informally known as the Brazil strain, South Africa strain, and UK strain). The degree of effectiveness is lower though in preventing illness when dealing with the Brazil or South Africa strains. This means that you might still get sick with COVID-19 if exposed to the Brazil or South Africa strains, but the illness should be milder if you are vaccinated versus if you were not vaccinated at all.

### **Can I get vaccinated if I was identified as a close contact / who had a known COVID-19 exposure?**

Yes. You are eligible to be vaccinated after you complete your quarantine period which is usually 10 days post-exposure to the positive COVID-19 case

### **Can people with underlying medical conditions receive the vaccine?**

People with underlying medical conditions can receive the COVID-19 vaccines provided they have not had an immediate or severe allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine or to any of the ingredients in the vaccine. Vaccination is an important consideration for adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions because they are at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19.

### **How does COVID-19 affect pregnant women?**

Changes to your body during pregnancy put you and your baby at risk for serious complications from COVID-19. Pregnant women who have COVID-19 and show symptoms are more likely to need care in an intensive care unit (ICU), to need a ventilator (for breathing support), or to die from the illness. Having COVID-19 may also increase your chances of pregnancy complications such as preterm delivery (birth before 37 weeks of pregnancy).

### **Is it safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy?**

So far, the vaccine studies have not enrolled pregnant women, so risks to pregnant women and their unborn babies are not known for sure. However, based on what is known about how these vaccines work and the ingredients they contain, experts believe they are *unlikely* to pose a risk to a pregnant woman or her fetus. Volunteers in vaccine studies who did not know they were pregnant when they got the COVID-19 vaccine are also being followed for birth outcomes. Like other vaccines given during pregnancy, it is possible that getting the COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy may help protect your baby from COVID-19 disease after birth.

### **Can breastfeeding women get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

CDC recommends breastfeeding women be given the option to be immunized. There are no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in breastfeeding women, the effects of mRNA vaccines on the breastfed infant or on milk production. However, mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the baby. There is no need to stop breastfeeding if you choose to get immunized.

### **Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I am trying to get pregnant?**

Yes. If you are planning to get pregnant, you can get a COVID-19 vaccine. You do not need to delay getting pregnant after you get a vaccine.

### **Can my child get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

Not yet, for children younger than 16 years of age. Testing for the first FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines — one from Pfizer/BioNTech and the other from Moderna — has not yet included participants younger than 16, so there are not enough data to establish if the COVID-19 vaccines is effective for children and teens in this group.

At present, the Pfizer vaccine has been authorized for those 16 years old and up. The Moderna vaccine is authorized for people 18 and older, and the company is recruiting for clinical trials to test its vaccine in children ages 12 through 17. Pfizer is enrolling participants ages 12–15 in their trials as well.

### **How will I know when to get my second dose?**

After receiving your first dose, everyone will receive a paper immunization card that will be completed at the time of vaccination. It will include the vaccine you received, date and location.

By texting **ENROLL to 1-833-VaxText (829-8398)**, you can opt in to receive a weekly text reminder for your second dose of COVID-19 vaccine or a reminder for when you are overdue for their second dose, in English or Spanish.

For those who receive the Pfizer vaccine it is recommended to receive the second dose 21-42 days after the first dose (3-6 weeks).

For those who received the Moderna vaccine it is recommended to receive the second dose 28-42 days after the first dose (4-6 weeks).

Currently the Moderna and Pfizer COVID vaccines are a 2-dose series.

It is recommended to complete both doses for the vaccine to be ~95% effective in preventing you from becoming ill with COVID-19.

If you received a vaccination at a County-sponsored clinic, please check the [county website](#) for the next 2<sup>nd</sup> dose clinic that will be posted every Wednesday at 9 a.m – [suttercounty.org/vaccine](http://suttercounty.org/vaccine) or [yuba.org/vaccines](http://yuba.org/vaccines)

If you received your first COVID vaccination elsewhere (not at a County-sponsored clinic), please reach out to that provider for further information about scheduling your 2<sup>nd</sup> dose. CDC guidelines state it is okay to receive the second dose after 28 to 42 days (4 to 6 weeks). Even if you get the second dose after 42 days, the CDC does not recommend restarting the entire series.

### **Will there be a required observation period after vaccination?**

For most people who do not have a history of allergic reactions, the post-vaccination monitoring time period is 15 minutes. For those persons with a history of severe allergic reactions to other vaccines, they are monitored for 30 minutes post-vaccination.

If you somehow had a severe allergic, anaphylactic reaction to the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, then you should not receive the second dose.

### **Will people who have already had COVID-19 be able to get vaccinated?**

Yes, you can get the vaccine even if you have been infected with COVID-19. To prevent the risk of infection to the clinic staff who will be vaccinating you, please do **not** come to get your vaccination until you are no longer infectious/out of your isolation period for your COVID-19 infection.

**If someone already had COVID-19, should they still get the vaccine?**

For those who have been infected with COVID-19 within the last 90 days, it is recommended that you hold off from receiving the vaccine and receive it after the 90 days have elapsed because the vaccine is still limited in supply and we want to be able to offer it to others who do not have temporary immunity.

Previous SARS-coV-2 Infection (COVID-19), whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, is not considered a contraindication to vaccination. You also do not need to get a COVID-19 test (whether it is the rapid test, the PCR test or the antibody test) before you get the vaccine.

**What if a person gets COVID-19 in between vaccine doses 1 and 2?**

If you were to get COVID-19 in between doses of vaccine, you should wait until you are no longer infectious from COVID-19. This usually takes 10 days from your diagnosis.