Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19

VACCINE SAFETY

Why should I get vaccinated for COVID-19?
COVID-19 can cause serious illness or even death. There’s no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you, putting their lives at risk. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine greatly reduces the risk that you’ll develop COVID-19. The vaccines prevent nearly 100% of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?
Yes. All FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States meet the FDA’s rigorous standards for safety and effectiveness. Millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered in the United States since December 14, 2020, and all COVID vaccines will continue to be monitored for safety.

How can COVID-19 vaccines be safe since they were developed so fast?
Safe COVID-19 vaccines were developed quickly through the use of a century of vaccine experience; technology that was new to vaccines but had been studied for two decades; a coronavirus vaccine already in development at the National Institutes of Health; and tens of thousands of volunteers for clinical trials that enabled rapid accumulation of data on safety and effectiveness. Simultaneous vaccine production and analysis of testing data also allowed vaccines to be shipped within days of FDA authorization.

Will the shot hurt or make me sick?
No. Some people might get sore muscles, feel tired, or have mild fever after getting the vaccine, but most people report only a sore arm where they got the shot. These reactions mean the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight COVID-19 if you are exposed. For most people, these side effects will go away on their own in a few days. If you have any concerns, call your doctor or nurse.

Why are people having allergic reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine?
A few people have had allergic reactions called anaphylaxis after getting a COVID-19 vaccine but were treated and have recovered. Your doctor can help you decide if it’s safe for you to be vaccinated.
Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?
You can’t get COVID-19 from any of the COVID-19 vaccines in use or being tested in the United States because none of them contains the live virus that causes the disease.

Is it safe for me to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I would like to have a baby one day?
Yes. People who want to get pregnant in the future can receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Experts believe that COVID-19 vaccines are unlikely to pose a risk to a person trying to become pregnant in the short or long term.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for people who are pregnant?
Yes. If you’re pregnant, you may choose to be vaccinated when it’s available to you. There’s currently no evidence that antibodies formed from COVID-19 vaccination cause any problem with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta.

People who are trying to become pregnant now or who plan to try in the future may receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available to them. There’s no evidence that fertility problems are a side effect of any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines. There’s no routine recommendation for taking a pregnancy test before you get a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have questions about getting vaccinated, talk with your health care provider.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for people with certain underlying medical conditions?
COVID-19 vaccines may be administered to most people with underlying medical conditions. If you have questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine, talk with your health care provider. Inform your vaccination provider about all your allergies and health conditions.

SAFETY IS THE TOP PRIORITY
The FDA and CDC have the highest standards when it comes to ensuring the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. Their process includes the following procedures:

- Scientists must first test vaccines extensively in medical studies to ensure they are safe and effective.
- Before the FDA authorizes a vaccine for use among the public, it ensures its safety by independently:
  - Reviewing the data from the medical studies, and
  - Inspecting the manufacturing facilities.
- Even after a vaccine has been authorized, the FDA and CDC closely monitor vaccine administration to identify even rare side effects or reactions.
- The FDA and CDC closely review any reports of side effects or reactions and share these facts with the public.

The extremely rare cases of blood clotting following Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine—just a small number of cases out of millions of vaccinations — show that the FDA and CDC’s vaccine safety monitoring systems work and catch even the rarest of reactions.

A thorough investigation has confirmed that Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine is safe and effective.

And doctors have been notified and trained to understand the signs to watch for and the proper course of treatment if blood clots occur.
VACCINE EFFECTIVENESS

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?
Vaccines train your immune system to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. With vaccines, you can build immunity to a disease without getting the disease.

How effective are the COVID-19 vaccines?
All FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines prevent nearly 100% of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19.

How long do COVID-19 vaccines last?
Scientists don’t know right now how long COVID-19 vaccines protect people, but they are investigating this in medical studies.

Do I need to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I’ve already had COVID-19?
Yes. Scientists don’t yet know how long natural antibodies in people who have had COVID-19 will be protect them from being reinfected.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine prevent me from infecting others?
COVID-19 vaccines reduce the likelihood that you’ll develop and be able to spread COVID-19. A growing body of evidence shows that the risk of vaccinated people getting and spreading the virus to others is low, but ongoing studies are further analyzing this question.

Do the vaccines work on the new COVID variants?
Scientists continue to study different forms, or variants, of the virus that causes COVID-19 to see if the vaccines will work against them. Current data suggest that COVID-19 vaccines authorized and recommended for use in the United States offer protection against most variants. For this reason, COVID-19 vaccines are an essential tool to protect people against COVID-19, including illness caused by the new variants. CDC will continue to monitor the impact these new variants may have on how well the vaccines work.

VACCINE AVAILABILITY

When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?
Vaccines are here now and everyone age 12 and older can get them. You have three ways to find vaccines near you:

- Go to vaccines.gov
- Text your ZIP code to 438829
- Call 1-800-232-0233

How much will the COVID-19 vaccine cost?
The federal government is providing the vaccine free of charge to all people living in the United States.
Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 and Adolescents

Kids aren’t getting severely ill from COVID-19, so why should I or my child get vaccinated?

• Even if you don’t get severely ill, you can still spread the virus to someone who might – like a grandparent, someone at church, a teacher at school, or anyone in your community.

• We are also learning more about the long-term effects of COVID-19. Even if you don’t get severely ill right now, or even have serious symptoms, you still could have long-term damage that causes health problems down the road.

Why is only Pfizer available for teens?

• So far, only Pfizer has applied and been approved to make their vaccine available to people as young as 12.

• On June 10th Moderna applied and is currently under review for their vaccine to be available to people as young as 12.

How do we know this vaccine is safe for kids and teens?

The vaccine has been through rigorous testing and thorough review by the FDA and CDC. Thousands of adolescents between 12-15 were in the clinical trials, and among those who received it, the vaccine was 100% effective at preventing COVID.

Will I or my child get Myocarditis and/or Pericarditis from receiving the Pfizer vaccine?

• In most cases, patients who presented for medical care have responded well to medications and rest and had prompt improvement of symptoms. Reported cases have occurred predominantly in male adolescents and young adults 16 years of age and older. Onset was typically within several days after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination, and cases have occurred more often after the second dose than the first dose. CDC and its partners are investigating these reports of myocarditis and pericarditis following mRNA COVID-19 vaccination.

• CDC continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 12 years of age and older given the risk of COVID-19 illness and related, possibly severe complications, such as long-term health problems, hospitalization, and even death.

• For more information on the clinical considerations on Myocarditis and Pericarditis after receipt of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines among adolescents and young adults here.

Do parents need to give consent before a vaccine is given to an eligible minor?

The federal government does not have specific requirements for medical consent for vaccination. States/jurisdictions have medical consent laws that address the circumstances under which a medical provider must seek consent prior to a medical procedure and the processes for obtaining that consent. These laws vary across jurisdictions. Providers may also be subject to policy requirements for consent within their own organizations.
Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines

**COVID-19 vaccines are safe**
All authorized COVID-19 vaccines meet FDA’s rigorous standards for safety and effectiveness. Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines. These vaccines will continue undergoing the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history to make sure that they are safe. [Learn more](#).

**COVID-19 vaccines cannot make you sick with COVID-19**
None of the vaccines being used or tested in the United States contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that they cannot make you sick with COVID-19. [Learn more](#).

**COVID-19 vaccines are effective**
All FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines prevent nearly 100% of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19. [Learn more](#).

**COVID-19 virus variants and vaccines**
Scientists are studying different forms, or variants, of the virus that causes COVID-19 to see if the vaccines will work against them. Current data suggest that COVID-19 vaccines authorized and recommended for use in the United States offer protection against most variants. For this reason, COVID-19 vaccines are an essential tool to protect people against COVID-19, including illness caused by the new variants. CDC will continue to monitor the impact these new variants may have on how well the vaccines work. [Learn more](#).

**COVID-19 vaccines are here**
Vaccines are here now and everyone age 12 and older can get them. You have three ways to find vaccines near you:
- Go to [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov)
- Text your ZIP code to 438829
- Call 1-800-232-0233

**COVID-19 vaccines are free**
The federal government is providing the vaccine free of charge to all people living in the United States. [Learn more](#).
What Fully Vaccinated People Need to Know

COVID-19 vaccines work well to prevent you from getting and spreading COVID-19. They’re nearly 100% effective at preventing hospitalization and death due to COVID-19.

Once you’re fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you can resume activities that you did prior to the pandemic.

**When is Someone Fully Vaccinated?**

You’re fully vaccinated 2 weeks after your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, like the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine

**What can fully vaccinated people do?**

- According to CDC, if you’re fully vaccinated, you DON’T have to wear a mask indoors or outdoors in public (except in health care settings), and you DON’T have to keep your distance from other people.
- Vaccinated and unvaccinated people must still follow federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial laws, rules, and regulations. That includes public transportation, airport/airplane, local business, and workplace guidance.
- Also, if you have a medical condition or you take medicines that weaken your immune system, you may NOT be fully protected from COVID-19 even if you’re fully vaccinated. Talk to your health care provider. Even after vaccination, you may need to continue taking precautions.

**What should unvaccinated people do to protect themselves and others from COVID-19?**

Until you’re fully vaccinated, you should continue to:

- Wear a mask when you’re inside public places.
- Stay at least 6 feet (that’s 2 arm lengths) apart from people who don’t live with you and who may not be vaccinated.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water aren’t available.

Public health officials continue to update recommendations for both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. For the latest guidance, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).
How to Talk About COVID-19 Vaccines With Friends and Family

**Listen to their questions with empathy**
COVID-19 vaccines are new, and it’s normal for people to have questions about them. The sheer amount of information—and misinformation—about COVID-19 vaccines can be overwhelming to anyone. You can help by listening without judgment and identifying the root of their concerns.

Acknowledge their emotions so they know they have been heard. For example, you can say, “It sounds like you are stressed at work and home, and concerns about the vaccine are another source of stress. That’s really tough.”

**Ask open-ended questions to explore their concerns**
Open-ended questions are meant to elicit more than a yes-or-no answer. Asking open-ended questions can help you understand what your friend or family member is worried about, where they learned any troubling information, and what they have done to get answers to their questions. For example, you can ask, “How did watching that news report make you feel? What did you do next?”

Do not be judgmental and respectfully ask questions that help you understand their concerns. For example, avoid things like, “That’s a silly concern,” or “Why would you be worried about that?”

**Ask permission to share information**
Once you understand your friend or family member’s question or concern, ask if you can provide some information, tell them where you get information you trust and be careful not to push information on them. You can find answers to common questions from reputable sources, including CDC.gov, the local health department website, or other trusted sources such as their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. Sometimes, sharing quick, accurate answers to common concerns your family or friends might have can go a long way toward moving someone from worry to confidence. If you don’t know the answer to their questions, consider offering to help look for information.
Help them find their own reason to get vaccinated

Everyone who chooses to get vaccinated does it for a reason—to protect their family, to protect their children, to be less anxious, to visit their parents, or to get back to activities like seeing friends, resuming work, or returning to school. After addressing concerns with empathy, respect and facts, you can steer the conversation from "why not" to the important reasons that matter to them— their "why." You may choose to share your reasons for getting vaccinated or discuss common goals you may have, like visiting with each other safely. The reasons that someone may choose to get vaccinated will always be those that are most compelling to them personally.

Help make their vaccination happen

Once someone decides on their "why," help them make a commitment to get vaccinated. Help make the path to vaccination shorter, easier, and less stressful for them. Offer to help your family member or friend make a vaccination appointment at a location nearby and, if needed, go with them to the appointment. Offer to help with transportation or to babysit if they need childcare. Remember, every person who chooses to get vaccinated brings us all a step closer to moving past the COVID-19 pandemic. As a trusted messenger to your family and friends, you can play a role in their decision to vaccinate.