



COVID-19 Vaccination – Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do we know about the COVID vaccine?

There are two vaccines being considered for approval by the federal government. Each one has shown excellent effectiveness and safety.

2. How will SD ensure equitable distribution?

Within 24 hours of vaccine availability, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will make recommendations regarding priority populations for COVID vaccine. The Department of Health will post the information about vaccine availability and distribution on the covid.sd.gov website.

3. Who will be vaccinated first?

Individuals with highest risk will be part of the **Phase 1** vaccination plan. The Department of Health has identified the following populations for initial COVID vaccination based on ACIP recommendations and the state's vaccine allocation from the federal government.

- Phase 1A
 - Frontline healthcare workers in emergency rooms, ICUs, and COVID units, and acute care units for COVID patients
 - Long-term care facility healthcare workers
- Phase 1B
 - Residents in nursing homes and assisted living centers
- Phase 1C
 - Other healthcare workers (including laboratory and clinic staff), public health workers, EMS, law enforcement, and correctional officers
- Phase 1D
 - Persons with 2 or more of the following underlying medical conditions: cancer; chronic kidney disease; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); heart conditions; immunocompromised state from solid organ transplant; obesity/severe obesity; sickle cell disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus
 - Teachers and other school/college staff; day care staff
 - Persons aged 65 years and older
 - Residents in congregate settings, independent living facilities and licensed group homes
 - Funeral service workers
- Phase 1E
 - Fire service personnel
 - Other critical infrastructure including water/wastewater, energy, finance, food service, food/agriculture, legal, manufacturing, shelter/housing, transportation/logistics, and information technology/communications

For more information on priority groups, please refer to the *Priority Groups for Phase 1* infographic at https://doh.sd.gov/documents/COVID19/Vaccine/COVIDVaccineDistribution_Phase1.pdf.

4. How many doses will SD receive?

The federal government provides vaccine doses to states based on the State's population.

5. When will the vaccine be available?

South Dakota has received initial doses of COVID-19 vaccine and has begun immunizing Phase 1a individuals. As additional doses of vaccines are received, we will then focus on immunization of other Phase 1 priority groups. Once Phase 1 individuals have been immunized, we will proceed to Phase 2 to immunize the general population. Phase 2 is expected to have sufficient supply for the general population.

6. Who is eligible for the vaccine?

Everyone will eventually be eligible to receive the COVID vaccination. However, priority populations have been identified to receive the vaccination first (see Q3).

7. Where can I go to get vaccinated?

In **Phase 2** of the plan individuals may get vaccination from physicians, pharmacies, drive-through clinics, and other vaccination sites. As vaccine becomes available, location of vaccination sites will be found at [Vaccinefinder.org](https://www.vaccinefinder.org).

8. If I'm not eligible, can I request an exception?

At this time there will not be exceptions.

9. If I'm considered high-risk, is my whole household eligible for a vaccine?

Only the individual that is high risk will receive the vaccine during the early phases when supplies are limited.

10. Will I need two doses?

Yes. The vaccines that are coming to the market will require two doses to be effective.

11. How is the vaccine given?

The vaccine is provided by an injection.

12. What is the effectiveness of the vaccine?

The vaccines coming to the market have shown primary efficacy of 94-95%.

13. Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the U.S. use the live virus that causes COVID-19. However, an individual could experience symptoms, such as fever, after getting the vaccine as the body builds immunity. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

14. Will the COVID-19 vaccine cause an individual to test positive on COVID-19 tests?

No. Vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States won't cause a person to test positive on a viral test which is used to see if a person has a current COVID-19 infection. If a person develops an immune response following vaccination, a person could test positive on an antibody test which indicates if a person had a previous infection.

15. Will getting the COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?

No. mRNA (messenger ribonucleic acid) can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or piece of a protein. COVID-19 vaccines use mRNA to work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA). The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where a person's DNA is kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with a person's DNA in any way.

16. How often do I need to get vaccinated?

Studies are ongoing and this data will be provided when available.

17. What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Typical side effects of any vaccine may include soreness and/or redness at the injection site and low-grade fever. Studies are ongoing and this data will be provided when available.

18. If I'm vaccinated and come into close contact with a positive case, do I still need to quarantine for 14 days?

Studies are ongoing and this data will be provided when available.

19. How long should a COVID-positive individual should wait to get a flu shot?

There is currently no data about timing of influenza vaccination in persons with COVID-19 or who are recovering from COVID-19 as it relates to influenza vaccine effectiveness. Individuals should consult with their medical provider if they have questions.

20. If an individual has already had COVID, will they need a vaccine?

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before.

21. Who will pay for COVID-19 vaccine? Can it be ordered privately?

COVID-19 vaccine will be procured and distributed by the federal government at no cost to enrolled COVID-19 vaccination providers. More information will be shared as soon as it is available.

22. Can providers bill for an office visit when administering COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, providers can bill for an office visit when administering COVID-19 vaccine.

23. Will providers be able to charge a COVID-19 vaccine administration fee?

Yes, vaccine providers will be able to charge an administration fee. However, participating vaccine providers must administer COVID-19 vaccine regardless of the vaccine recipient's ability to pay. COVID-19 vaccine administration fees or coverage status, as stated in the CDC Provider Agreement. Vaccine providers may seek appropriate reimbursement from a program or plan that covers COVID-19 vaccine administration fees for the vaccine recipient. For uninsured patients, the vaccine provider can seek reimbursement for an administration fee from the HRSA Provider Relief Fund.

24. Can a client be turned away if they owe a previous balance to the provider?

COVID-19 vaccine is being provided at no cost to participating vaccine providers and should be provided regardless of ability to pay.