

# COVID-19 Post-Vaccine

## Frequently Asked Questions



### I got the COVID-19 vaccine — now what?

If you're scheduled to get the vaccine or have already received it, that's great! Thank you for helping stop the spread of COVID-19. You may be wondering if life can go completely back to normal. Not quite. Read through the following questions and answers to understand what you should and should not do once you've received the vaccine.

### Does it matter which COVID-19 vaccine I get?

- There are two vaccines that have been given a green light by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for distribution in the U.S.: the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. A vaccine from Johnson & Johnson (J&J) is likely to be approved by the FDA by the end of February.
- It's unlikely that you'll have a choice of which vaccine you receive. However, each of these three vaccines have proven to be safe and 100% effective at preventing hospitalizations in studies with more than 150,000 volunteers.

### Will I feel ill after getting the vaccine?

- Like any medication, vaccines can cause side effects. Usually vaccine side effects are minor; for example, a sore arm where the shot was given or a low-grade fever and some muscle aches. These side effects go away on their own within a day or two. And, they offer assurance that the vaccine is doing its job. More significant side effects or adverse events are extremely rare and should be reported to your health care professional.

### Can I still get COVID-19 after receiving the vaccine?

- It is possible, particularly before your vaccine has reached its full effectiveness.
- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines both require two doses, while the J&J vaccine requires a single dose. There is a lag between when you get your first shot and when your body starts building immunity, so it's possible to be exposed and develop COVID-19 symptoms during the weeks between the first and second shots. It takes about one or two weeks after the second shot for the vaccine to reach its full protection level.
- Even those who get infections after a COVID vaccine tend to have a much milder illness than those who are unvaccinated.

### Do I really need a second injection if I got the Moderna or the Pfizer vaccine?

- Yes, these two vaccines are most effective when administered as intended.
- While there have been discussions about reducing the number of doses, extending the length of time between doses, changing the dose (half-dose), or mixing and matching vaccines in order to immunize more people, the FDA has maintained that it's important to get both doses at the specified intervals.
- If the time between your first and second shot of either vaccine must be extended for any reason, the CDC urges you to get the second shot no later than six-weeks after the first.

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### I've had both of my injections — can I go back to “normal” life?

After receiving the vaccines, it's still possible to get the virus, and it's also possible to be a carrier of COVID-19, which means you can potentially spread it to others. Even mild cases can result in devastating long-haul symptoms like loss of smell or taste. Until most Americans are vaccinated against COVID-19, we must all continue to do our part to stop the spread by continuing to practice safety protocols, including:

- Wearing a mask over your nose and mouth
- Staying at least six feet away from others
- Avoiding poorly ventilated spaces
- Washing your hands frequently

Public health authorities will loosen these recommendations when the amount of community transmission declines considerably.

### Do I still need to wear a mask?

- Yes. Existing COVID-19 safety protocols, such as wearing face coverings over your nose and mouth, are vital to stop the spread of airborne particles until most Americans are vaccinated.

### Do I still need to social distance?

- Yes. As with wearing a mask, maintaining social distancing (at least six feet apart) and avoiding crowds can continue to help slow the spread of COVID-19, even after you have been vaccinated.

### Do the currently available vaccines protect against new variants of the COVID-19 virus?

- Yes, these vaccines remain effective against new variants of the virus. They are especially effective in preventing severe illness, hospitalizations and deaths. Vaccines are typically tweaked as more is learned, and manufacturers are actively working on ways to add protections against the new variants into their existing vaccines.

### Are other vaccine options coming and should I wait for them?

- There are several other COVID-19 vaccines in development that are expected to be available in the U.S. soon. In addition to the J&J vaccine, which only requires one shot, we expect vaccinations from AstraZeneca and Novavax later this year. All of these vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective in large scale clinical studies across the globe.
- Ultimately, it's unlikely that you'll have a choice in what vaccine you receive, and vaccine experts are clear in their recommendations that we all get fully immunized as soon as possible with whichever vaccine is available to us.