

COVID-19 Vaccine

Frequently Asked Questions



Here's what we know so far.

As the new COVID-19 vaccines become available across the United States, we want you to know how it will be covered by your medical plan. While vaccine supplies may be limited right now, public health experts currently expect that availability will expand widely by late spring and early summer. Learn more here.

Am I required to get the vaccine?

- No, but you are encouraged to get vaccinated once you are eligible. The vaccine is one important way we can slow COVID-19 cases in the United States, and it may help protect your family, friends and colleagues in addition to yourself.
- It may take some time before you or your family and friends can all get vaccinated. Remember, you should continue to slow the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a mask, staying socially distanced (at least six feet apart), washing your hands regularly, and avoiding crowds regardless of whether or not you have gotten vaccinated.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines considered safe and effective?

- Yes. Before vaccines are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), scientists test them extensively to ensure they are effective and safe. The benefits of vaccines far outweigh the risks. In the case of the new COVID-19 vaccines, the FDA granted emergency use authorization based on data from the manufacturers and findings from large clinical trials.
- As more and more Americans get vaccinated against COVID-19, the FDA will continue to monitor for safety and effectiveness. Allergic reactions are very rare (about one case for each 90,000 vaccinations given).

Can children and pregnant women get COVID-19 vaccines?

- The vaccine is only approved for those over age 16 (Pfizer) or 18 (Moderna).
- The vaccine has not been tested with pregnant women, but COVID-19 is very dangerous in pregnancy, and similar vaccines have been shown to be safe in pregnancy. Pregnant women should decide whether they wish to get vaccinated in consultation with their obstetrician.

I previously had COVID-19 – should I get the vaccine?

- Yes. The vaccine is recommended for those who have had COVID-19 and will probably provide longer immunity. If you've had COVID-19 in the last three months, you can safely wait until those who have no immunity have been vaccinated.

What if 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. These minor side effects go away on their own within a day or two. And, these minor side effects may offer assurance that the vaccine is doing its job.
- More significant side effects or adverse events are shown to be extremely rare, but should be reported to your health care professional.

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How will I know when to come back for the second shot?

- The time frame between your first and second shot is determined by which vaccine you received. The second shot should be scheduled 3 weeks (or 21 days) after your first shot for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and 1 month (or 28 days) for the Moderna vaccine. You should get your second shot as close to the recommended timing as possible.
- The location that set up your first appointment (e.g., your doctor's office, a state or local health department, or employer) will let you know how to book the appointment for the second shot. Contact them for assistance using their scheduling system.

How will the vaccine be covered?

- You will not be charged for the COVID-19 vaccine. Whether you're covered by a medical plan, Medicare or are uninsured, the government has communicated that vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to Americans at no cost.
- If you're covered by a medical plan, there may be an administration fee depending on where you get your vaccine, and this will be covered by your medical plan as preventive care.
- Remember, the currently approved COVID-19 vaccinations require a booster shot (or second shot) 21 or 28 days after the first dose (depending on vaccine manufacturer) to be effective. Any administration charges for this second dose are also 100% covered.

Do I need to bring my ID card when I get the vaccine?

Yes! To make sure you're covered as expected:

- Show your medical plan ID card if you're vaccinated at the doctor's office or a clinic; or
- Show your prescription drug ID card if you're vaccinated at a pharmacy.

You'll be covered no matter where you get the vaccine, so go wherever is convenient for you.

How will I know when and where I can get the vaccine?

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) makes recommendations for who should be offered the COVID-19 vaccine first, supplies are limited, and vaccine distribution currently varies by state. Eligibility will depend on availability as well as your age, health status, occupation and other factors. The current CDC guidelines are:

- Phase 1a: Health care workers and nursing home workers and residents
- Phase 1b: Frontline essential workers and those age 75 and above
- Phase 1c: Those between the ages of 65 and 74, those between the ages of 16 and 64 with high-risk conditions and all other essential workers
- Phase 2: Everyone else

Your state health department is the best place to start to find out where and when you can get the vaccine. Each state's website can be found on [page 3](#). You can also contact your primary care provider for more information.

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U.S. State Health Department Links



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- [Alaska](#)
- [Arizona](#)
- [Arkansas](#)
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