

Getting the Facts: Vaccine Awareness and Slowing the Spread

Vaccines Are Here. What You Need to Know.

How the COVID-19 vaccines work

- The COVID-19 vaccines [help your body develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19](#) without you getting the virus.
- Different vaccines work in different ways, but all types of vaccines teach the body how to fight the virus in the future and build immunity.
- It can take a few weeks for your body to build immunity after getting a COVID-19 vaccine.
- It's possible that you could get COVID-19 just before or after being vaccinated, but it isn't possible to get COVID-19 from any of the vaccines being used or tested in the United States.

Benefits of getting vaccinated

- COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how it will affect you.
- All available COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19, including from the Delta variant. Remember, to get the most protection from the vaccines, you need all the recommended doses:
 - The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines require two initial doses.
 - Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine requires one initial dose.



- If you meet the criteria for having a [compromised immune system](#), you should get a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine at least 4 weeks after your second dose. An FDA and CDC review of data for Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine will determine whether a second dose is appropriate for people with compromised immune systems.
- COVID-19 vaccines reduce the likelihood that you'll develop and be able to spread COVID-19. In rare occasions, some vaccinated people can get COVID-19 from the highly contagious Delta variant and spread it to others. Importantly, only a very small amount of spread happening around the country comes from vaccinated individuals.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

- Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States meet the FDA's rigorous standards for safety and effectiveness. Tens of millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines, and all COVID vaccines will continue to be monitored for safety.
- Serious health effects from vaccines are very rare. It's highly unlikely that COVID-19 vaccines will cause long-term health problems. Also, there is no evidence at all that they will cause infertility or cancer.
- Your risk for serious health problems is much lower from the vaccine than your risk if you're unvaccinated and get COVID-19. COVID-19 can leave you with heart and lung damage and other conditions that require long-term treatment. Vaccines are much safer paths to immunity than the disease itself.

What are the possible side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines?

- People who've been vaccinated commonly report [side effects](#)—normal signs that your body is building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19.
- These side effects are mild and typically short-lived, lasting at most a few days. The most common side effect is a sore arm at the injection site. Other side effects include fever, feeling tired, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, and chills.
- If you have pain or discomfort, talk to your doctor about taking an over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, *after* you've been vaccinated.

When can I receive a vaccine?

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

Key Points

- Vaccines are here now and everyone age 12 and older in the United States can get them. This is no time to let down your guard. Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available to us. The combination of getting vaccinated and following the CDC's recommendations to protect yourself and others offers the best protection.
- Even if you've had COVID-19, experts still recommend that you get vaccinated, because we don't yet know how long natural antibodies last.
- If you currently have COVID-19, you should wait until after you recover and have left isolation to get vaccinated.
- The vaccines are free of charge to all people living in the United States, regardless of your immigration or health insurance status.
- CDC recommends that [people who have allergies not related to vaccines or injectable medications](#)—such as food, pet, or latex allergies—get vaccinated.
- If you've ever had a severe allergic reaction to any of [the ingredients in a COVID-19 vaccine](#), then do NOT take that particular vaccine.

We Must Continue to Slow the Spread

Whether you choose to receive the vaccination, we must all continue to do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect our health. Until you're fully vaccinated (2 weeks after your final dose), here's what we can do:

- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth when you're inside public places (even vaccinated people in [areas of substantial or high spread of COVID-19](#) wear a mask inside public places).
- [Stay at least 6 feet apart from people](#) who don't live with you and who may not be vaccinated.
- [Avoid crowds](#).



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
 - 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 and Guillain-Barré Syndrome following Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine and heart inflammation following Pfizer-BioNTech's and Moderna's vaccines—a very 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 reactions.

Thorough investigations have confirmed that all three FDA-authorized vaccines are safe and effective. Medical experts stress that the benefits of receiving any of the COVID-19 vaccines in use in the United States far outweigh any potential risks.

The monitoring systems ensure that doctors are notified to watch for signs of serious reactions, no matter how rare, and are aware of proper courses of treatment.