



COVID-19 Vaccine

Billions of doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been safely administered around the world since December 2020 with over 68% of the world's population receiving at least one dose. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone five years and older be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect against the disease and help stop the pandemic.



Q: Which vaccines are approved for use?

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has emergency authorized or fully approved Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Novavax (Adjuvanted), and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines. The agency has said the Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna, and Novavax vaccines are highly effective and safe in preventing severe cases of COVID-19 that cause hospitalization or death.

The FDA has limited the use of the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine. The

limitations include those 18 years or older who can't access other approved vaccines that aren't clinically appropriate for them or who chose to have the Johnson & Johnson vaccine because they wouldn't receive a different COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Why should I get the vaccine?

Since the coronavirus emerged in 2019, it has killed millions of people around the world. The best way to avoid infection and prevent the communal spread of COVID-19 is to get vaccinated.

Q: How can I get the vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine is widely available at health clinics and pharmacies nationwide. Check their website or call for an appointment. Call your physician to request an appointment at their office. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's vaccine website at <https://www.vaccines.gov/>, text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you. Transportation may be available to vaccination sites if needed.

Q: How much does the vaccine cost?

The vaccine is 100% free, including all administrative fees. Providers may request patient information, such as social security number, to verify insurance status, but this information is not required for people to receive the vaccine.

Q: What are the differences between the COVID vaccines?

Pfizer, Novavax, and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines require a second dose, though with slightly different time intervals: Pfizer BioNTech's and Novavax Adjuvanted's second dose are given 21 days after the initial dose, while Moderna's is scheduled for 28 days after the initial dose. The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine is given in one dose.

The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are **not** interchangeable. Whichever vaccine you receive as your first dose must be the same for the second dose. Keep a record of which vaccine you receive.

Q: I'm fully vaccinated. Do I need a booster?

The CDC recommends everyone get a booster shot.

The CDC has approved an updated (bivalent) booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The CDC has approved mix-and-match booster doses for those eligible for a booster. This means that a person can receive a booster of a COVID-19 vaccine that is different than the COVID-19 vaccine they received for their primary series or initial booster.

CDC recommends that people ages five years and older receive one updated (bivalent) booster at least two months after their last COVID-19 vaccine dose, whether that was:

- Their final primary series dose, or
- An original (monovalent) booster

People who received more than one original (monovalent) booster are also recommended to get an updated (bivalent) booster.

The recommended vaccination schedule from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/COVID-19-immunization-schedule-ages-6months-older.pdf>.

You can also stay updated on the CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html#vaccine-table>

Q: How many booster shots do I need?

The FDA and CDC have not said how many booster shots a person needs to protect against COVID-19 and its variants. Newer booster shots from Pfizer BioNTech, Novavax, and Moderna target the latest COVID-19 variants. While older vaccines

are still effective at protecting against severe illness, their effectiveness has decreased.

You can receive a booster if your last shot was at least two months ago, you're 60 or older, at high risk of severe COVID-19, or haven't had COVID-19 recently.

Q: I've already had COVID-19. Do I need the vaccine?

Yes. The CDC recommends that people get vaccinated even if they already had COVID-19. The amount of immunity created by having had COVID-19 is unknown; reinfection or contracting a variant, with serious health complications, is possible.

People who recently had COVID-19 should consider delaying the next COVID-19 vaccine dose (primary dose or updated booster) by three months from when symptoms started or if they were symptomless when they first received a positive test.

Q: Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No. The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19. None of the FDA-authorized or approved vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19.

Q: What are the possible side effects of the vaccine?

In general, side effects from the vaccine could include redness, swelling, pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, nausea, or swollen lymph nodes.

If you experience soreness at the vaccination site, moving your arm around can help relieve pain and swelling. Also, drink plenty of fluids if you have a fever. These symptoms, and all other side effects, can last 24-48 hours.

Contact your doctor if the soreness or redness at the site of the shot **increases** after 24 hours. Or if the side effects are worrying you or lasting longer than a couple of days.

With the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, there is a risk for what the CDC calls “a rare but serious adverse event—blood clots with low platelets.” This condition has occurred in roughly seven per 1 million vaccinated women between 18 and 49 years old.

Q: What should someone with a spinal cord injury be aware of when receiving the vaccine?

Many people with spinal cord injuries receive shots without any problems. Barring any allergies to ingredients in the COVID-19 vaccine, there is nothing specific to the vaccine that poses a concern for individuals with spinal cord injuries. However, any pain or discomfort below the level of injury potentially caused by side effects could lead to increased blood pressure and trigger autonomic dysreflexia (AD,) a potentially life-threatening condition. Symptoms will vary, but signs of AD may include a pounding headache, flushed face, sweating above the level of injury, goose flesh below the level of injury, nasal stuffiness, nausea, and a slow pulse (slower than 60 beats per minute).

As a precaution, carry a **Reeve Foundation AD wallet card** (containing baseline blood pressure, level of injury, and emergency contacts) to the vaccination and stay on-site for 30 minutes to ensure you feel fine. Reeve wallet cards can be found at www.ChristopherReeve.org/cards.

Q: What health information should I share with the vaccine provider before getting the vaccine?

Describe all medical conditions, including if you have a bleeding disorder or are on a blood thinner, have any allergies, have a fever, are immunocompromised or take a medicine that affects your immune system, are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, are breastfeeding, or have received another COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Who should not get the vaccine?

Anyone who has had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in these vaccines or has experienced a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of this vaccine should not receive the vaccine.

Q: What are the ingredients in the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine?

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine contains the following ingredients: messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA), lipids ((4-hydroxybutyl)azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis(2-hexyldecanoate), 2 [(polyethylene glycol)-2000]-N,N-ditetradecylacetamide, 1,2-Distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine, and cholesterol), potassium chloride, monobasic potassium phosphate, sodium chloride, dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate, and sucrose.

Q: What are the ingredients in the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine?

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine contains the following ingredients: messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA), lipids (SM-102, polyethylene glycol [PEG] 2000 dimyristoyl glycerol [DMG], cholesterol, and 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine [DSPC]), tromethamine, tromethamine hydrochloride, acetic acid, sodium acetate, and sucrose.

Q: What are the ingredients in the Novavax Adjuvanted vaccine?

The Novavax COVID-19, Adjuvanted vaccine ingredients are SARS-CoV-2 spike protein (produced in insect cells) and Matrix-M adjuvant (contains saponin extracts from the bark of Soapbark tree).

Q: What are the ingredients in the Johnson & COVID-19 vaccine?

The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine contains the following ingredients: recombinant, replication-incompetent adenovirus type 26 expressing the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, citric acid monohydrate, trisodium citrate dihydrate, ethanol, 2-hydroxypropyl- β -cyclodextrin (HBCD), polysorbate-80, sodium chloride.

Q: I have experienced severe allergic reactions before; should I get the vaccine?

According to the CDC, individuals with a history of severe allergic reactions (including food, pet, venom, environmental, and oral medication allergies) unrelated to vaccines or injectable medicines should still receive the vaccine.

Individuals with a history of allergic reactions to other vaccines or injectable medicine should speak with their doctor to determine if it is safe to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Individuals who have had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, or an allergic reaction to polyethylene glycol (PEG) or polysorbate, should not get either of the currently available vaccines.

A severe allergic reaction will generally occur within the hour after receiving the vaccine. Signs include difficulty breathing, swelling of the face and throat, increased heart rate, body rash, dizziness, and weakness. Individuals who have previously had severe allergic reactions should be monitored on-site for 30 minutes after receiving the vaccine.

Q: Should I get both the flu shot and the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. The CDC advises people to get the flu shot and COVID-19 vaccine or booster shot. The CDC has determined it's safe to receive both simultaneously.

Q: After I receive the vaccine, will I still need to wear a mask?

The CDC recommends that fully vaccinated individuals wear a mask indoors in areas of substantial transmission or if an underlying medical condition weakens their immune system.

Q: Where is the best place to find the most current and accurate information

about COVID-19 vaccines?

It is critical to avoid misinformation about the coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine. The best place to fact-check and find accurate information is through the frequently updated resource pages at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>), [Food & Drug Administration](https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines) (<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>) and Department of Health and Human Services (<https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/index.html>) websites.

Sources: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S Department of Health and Human Services, and U.S Food & Drug Administration

Need to talk to someone?

Our Information Specialists are available to answer your questions.

Call toll-free 1-800-539-7309 Mon-Fri, 9 am-8 pm EST.

Schedule a call or ask a question online at <https://www.ChristopherReeve.org/Ask>

Resources on COVID-19 Vaccines:

Administration for Community Living: Disability Information and Access Line (DIAL)

<https://acl.gov/DIAL>

DIAL connects callers to information about accessing the COVID-19 vaccine and related support for people with disabilities. DIAL connects callers to vaccine sites and provides information about vaccination barriers. Phone: 888-677-1199 or email: DIAL@n4a.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: COVID-19 Vaccines

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Statement on ACIP Booster Recommendations

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0924-booster-recommendations-.html>

Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation webinar by Nurse Linda on COVID-19 Vaccines 12/30/20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOEqacAS6CU>

Food and Drug Administration: COVID-19 Vaccines

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>

HHS.gov: HHS Launches New Reimbursement Program for COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Fees Not Covered by Insurance

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/05/03/hhs-launches-new-reimbursement-program-for-covid19-vaccine-administration-fees-not-covered-by-insurance.html>

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), is announcing a new program covering the costs of administering COVID-

19 vaccines to patients enrolled in health plans that do not cover vaccination fees or cover them with patient cost-sharing. Since providers cannot bill patients for COVID-19 vaccination fees, this new program, the COVID-19 Coverage Assistance Fund (CAF), addresses an outstanding compensation need for providers on the front lines vaccinating underinsured patients.

HHS Office of Civil Rights Factsheet: Disability Access in Vaccine Distribution

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/disability-access-vaccine-distribution.pdf>

HHS Office of Civil Rights New Legal Guidance and Resources to Ensure and Expand Access to COVID-19 Vaccines for People with Disabilities and Older Adults

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/04/13/new-legal-guidance-and-resources-to-ensure-and-expand-access-to-covid-19-vaccines-for-people-with-disabilities-and-older-adults.html>

HRSA: COVID-19 Vaccine Poster for Patients

<https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/coronavirus/provider-covid-vaccine-factsheet.pdf>

The poster has info for patients on what to do if they are billed without insurance, as the vaccine should be free to individuals.

HRSA: COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet for Providers: What Health Care Providers Need to Know About COVID-19 Vaccine Fees and Reimbursements

<https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/coronavirus/provider-covid-vaccine-factsheet.pdf>

Made to Save

<https://madetosave.org/>

Made to Save is a national grassroots effort to ensure communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic have access to vaccines and timely information.

Post-Polio Health International: COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Polio Survivors

<https://post-polio.org/covid-19-vaccine/>

World Health Organization: COVID-19 Vaccines

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/covid-19-vaccines>

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