

## **Is the vaccine safe? Why should I get it?**

Being immunized against COVID-19 can prevent you from getting the virus and protect others around you. The vaccine has been found in trials to be 95 percent effective in preventing COVID-19 infections in participants, and its side effects are generally mild, including fatigue, headache and sometimes fever for a day or two.

While the COVID-19 vaccine is new, the science used to create it is not. The COVID-19 vaccine has been thoroughly tested in laboratory and clinical settings to make sure it is safe and effective. The [FDA](#) approved the vaccines under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), meaning the vaccine must be proven safe and effective in the same way that all medications and devices must be. Scientists will continue to study the effects of the vaccine for the next few years. The vaccine would not be approved for use if it were harmful or unsafe.

## **How much does the vaccine cost?**

The vaccine will be free regardless of whether you have insurance, but your insurance may be charged an administration fee for the first dose and a smaller fee for the second dose. Please bring your insurance card to your appointment.

## **How was allocation of COVID-19 vaccine determined?**

The supply of COVID-19 vaccine is limited, so decisions on the delivery of vaccine have been based on recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices ([ACIP](#)) and several state advisory committees. The goal is for everyone to be able to get vaccinated as soon as enough supply is available.

The recommendations were made with these goals in mind:

- Decrease hospitalizations and death.
- Preserve functioning of society.
- Reduce the extra burden COVID-19 is having on people already facing disparities.

## **When can I get vaccinated?**

Because the vaccine is in short supply, it's initially available to healthcare workers who have contact with patients or infectious material, first responders and staff and residents of long-term care facilities. It is also now available to Indiana residents who are age 55 and older. The state Department of Health is expanding the availability to others, as well as the number of vaccination sites, as more vaccine becomes available. Click [here](#) for a list of who is currently eligible. Visit [ourshot.in.gov](http://ourshot.in.gov) for updates.

## **How can long-term care residents get vaccinated?**

Seniors are among those most seriously impacted by COVID-19, so they are among the first who can get vaccinated. A federal partnership between the facilities and pharmacies to vaccinate residents and their essential family caregivers is already underway.

## **What is the time for immunity once fully vaccinated and how long does immunity last? Do I have to get a vaccine every year like the flu?**

CDC guidance says it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination.

Scientists are still learning about the length of time both natural immunity (immunity the body develops after an illness) and vaccine-induced immunity for COVID-19 will last. Study participants will be followed for two years to determine durability of immune response and side effects.

### **Should I get vaccinated if I've had COVID-19 in the past 90 days?**

Since reinfection risk is low in the 90 days after COVID-19, you can delay vaccination until 90 days post-infection. You should not get vaccinated while ill or during an isolation or quarantine period to avoid exposing others.

### **After a person receives both doses of the vaccine, if they develop cold/flu symptoms, what are the recommendations? Should they be tested for SARS-CoV-2 and influenza?**

Some people may experience some discomfort in the days following their immunization. These discomforts can be an indication that the body's immune system is working with the vaccine to develop antibodies. These discomforts should only last a few days and may include:

- Pain or redness where the shot was given
- Soreness in the arm where the shot was given
- Fatigue
- Chills
- Fever

These symptoms are common in the days after vaccination. This does not mean the vaccine recipient has COVID-19. There is no active virus in the vaccine, which means it can't give you COVID-19. If a vaccine recipient develops a cough, sore throat or runny nose, current monitoring and testing guidelines for COVID-19 should continue to be followed.

Anyone who has received the vaccine is encouraged to participate in [V-safe](#), an after-vaccination health checker that works on your smartphone.

If you believe you may be experiencing a reaction to the shot, contact your medical provider and report it via the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Reports can be entered here:

<https://vaers.hhs.gov/esub/index.jsp>

### **How does the vaccine work?**

The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines have a very small piece of messenger RNA (mRNA), a type of material that gives the body instructions for making a protein from the COVID-19 virus. Once this protein is made, it triggers the body to make antibodies to fight it. If you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19, you will already have antibodies to fight the virus. The mRNA never enters the nucleus of our body cells, which is where our DNA (genetic material) is found. For more information, visit the CDC's "[Understand mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#)" page.

The Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine is a viral vector vaccine. It uses a modified version of a different virus (the vector) to deliver important instructions to our cells. For COVID-19 viral vector vaccines, the vector (not the virus that causes COVID-19, but a different, harmless virus) will enter a cell in our body and then use the cell's machinery to produce a harmless piece of the virus that causes COVID-19. This piece is known as a spike protein, and it is only found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19. For more information, visit the [CDC's Understanding COVID-19 Viral Vector Vaccines](#) page.



### **After you are vaccinated, can you stop wearing masks and not have to quarantine if exposed?**

You should not stop wearing a mask and will still need to quarantine if you are a close contact of a positive case, even if you have received the vaccine. Studies only looked at whether someone who received the vaccine developed COVID-19 (symptoms and positive test). Studies did not determine if vaccinated individuals who were exposed after vaccination can pass it on to others. Pfizer is conducting these studies right now and hopes to have additional information in coming months. Until then, wear your mask, wash your hands, and quarantine if exposed to someone with COVID.

### **Will the vaccine make antibody tests positive?**

If your body develops an immune response, which is the goal of vaccination, there is a possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. Antibody tests indicate you had a previous infection and that you may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results. COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on viral tests.

### **Will the vaccine be mandatory?**

The state of Indiana will not mandate vaccine. The decision regarding whether to mandate that individuals receive the vaccine will likely be made by the employers, schools, institutes of learning or other non-healthcare entities.

### **Do I still have to quarantine if I am a contact of someone with COVID-19 even if I'm vaccinated?**

People who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine if exposed to someone with COVID-19 within three months of that vaccination, starting from two weeks after receiving the last dose.

### **Is there a risk of anaphylaxis for people who have had reactions to other injections?**

This reaction is rare and occurred in individuals who had anaphylactic reactions to injections before. Scientists don't know exactly which vaccine ingredient caused it. Although not yet proven, they suspect persons with allergies to polyethylene glycol (PEG) injections would be at risk. You can still get vaccinated if you have a history of anaphylaxis, but you should discuss the risk with your healthcare provider, as special precautions may need to be taken.

These recommendations include allergic reactions to PEG and polysorbate. Polysorbate is not an ingredient in either mRNA COVID-19 vaccine but is closely related to PEG, which is in the vaccines. People who are allergic to PEG or polysorbate should not get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Additional resources:**

- State of Indiana Coronavirus Information: <https://ourshot.in.gov>
- Pfizer Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients (English): <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>
- Pfizer Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients (Spanish / Additional Languages): <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine#additional>
- Moderna Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients (English): <https://www.modernatx.com/covid19vaccine-eua/>
- Moderna Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients (Spanish / Additional Languages): <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/moderna-covid-19-vaccine>.



- Johnson & Johnson Fact Sheet for Recipients: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/janssen-covid-19-vaccine#additional>
- CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html>
- CDC Information on mRNA Vaccines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>
- CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/covid-19.html>
- CDC Vaccine Safety: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>
- Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS): <https://vaers.hhs.gov/esub/index.jsp>

