

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ / 2.1.21

Safety

Q: Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Like all vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine, also known as mRNA, has been rigorously tested for safety before being authorized for use in the United States. The technology used to create the vaccine is new, but not unknown; it has been studied for more than a decade. The vaccine does not use live virus and does not change or interact with the recipient's DNA in any way. The vaccine cannot give the recipient the COVID-19 disease. We encourage people that have concerns to discuss with their primary care provider.

The COVID-19 vaccine may be administered to:

- Pregnant, breastfeeding, and lactating women
- Those who have already contracted COVID-19
- Those with underlying medical conditions, including people who are immunosuppressed

Q: Can the vaccine give me COVID-19?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for use or in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. However, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible you could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick.

Q: What symptoms will I get after I receive the vaccine?

Side effects of the COVID vaccine can include:

- Pain/swelling at the injection site
- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Tiredness

In most cases, discomfort from fever or pain is normal. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider if the redness or tenderness where you got the shot increases after 24 hours or if your side effects are worrying you and do not seem to be going away after a few days.

Vaccine Administration

Q: How often will I need to get this vaccine?

Researchers and scientists are still learning about the frequency of vaccines needed, if it is once a year or more infrequently. As they continue to learn more, they will share findings and make recommendations for highest efficacy.

Q: Can I mix brands of vaccines?

No, you cannot mix brands of vaccines. Your second dose should be from the same manufacturer as your first dose.

Q: Do I need to come back for the second dose?

Yes. It is crucial that you receive both the first and second dose of the vaccine to be effective. Get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first one, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get a second shot.

Effectiveness

Q: How effective is the vaccine? If we're not sure, why would I get it?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted Emergency Use Authorizations (EUA) for two COVID-19 vaccines which have been shown to be safe and effective as determined by data from the manufacturers and findings from large clinical trials. These data demonstrate that the known and potential benefits of this vaccine outweigh the known and potential harms of becoming infected with COVID-19.

Q: Are both the Moderna & Pfizer vaccines effective?

Studies show both the Moderna and the Pfizer vaccines were over 94% effective at preventing laboratory confirmed COVID-19 illness.

Q: Will the COVID vaccine cover me with the new strains?

Information about the characteristics of the new strain is rapidly emerging. Scientists are working to learn more about how easily they might spread, whether they could cause more severe illness, and whether current vaccines will protect people against them. At this time, there is no evidence that these variants cause more severe illness or increased risk of death.

Q: After I get the vaccine, do I still need to wear a mask?

Yes. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic, including wearing a mask, social distancing, and washing your hands.

Q: Once I've received the vaccine, is it safe for me to resume seeing my family and friends?

While you may have received the vaccine, it's important to continue using the tools to stay safe. This includes social distancing and being mindful of exposing yourself and others to risks. If you do spend time with those outside of your immediate household, it is key that you still wear a mask, distance yourself by at least 6 feet, and wash your hands as frequently as possible.

Long term effects

Q: Does the COVID-19 vaccine change my DNA?

No. COVID-19 mRNA vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way.

The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. This means the mRNA cannot affect our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 mRNA vaccines work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease.

At the end of the process, our bodies have learned how to protect against future infection. That immune response and making antibodies is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies.

Why Get the Vaccine

Q: I already had COVID-19, why should I still get the vaccine?

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that reinfection with COVID-19 is possible, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 infection. If you were treated for COVID-19 symptoms with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you received or if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Isn't it better to have your natural immune system respond versus a vaccine?

The protection someone gains from having an infection (called "natural immunity") varies depending on the disease, and varies from person to person. Because this virus is new, we don't know how long natural immunity might last. Current evidence suggests that getting the virus again (reinfection) is uncommon in the 90 days after the first infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. We won't know how long immunity lasts after vaccination until we have more data on how well COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. Ultimately, getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice.

Vaccine Logistics

Q: What does the vaccine cost?

Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers can charge an administration fee for giving someone the shot. If you are a TrueCare patient and get the vaccine at one of our locations when it is available, you will not be charged for the vaccine.

Q: How will I know when I am able to get the vaccine?

TrueCare will be contacting patients as soon as it is their turn to receive the COVID vaccine. Rest assured, we will be contacting patients as soon as we can offer the vaccine.

Q: How long will I have to wait to get the vaccine?

TrueCare is following recommendations from the CDC as to who is highest priority to receive the vaccine. Essential workers, those aged 65 and older, and those with conditions that place them at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 will likely receive the vaccine before the rest of the public.

While you wait to receive your vaccine, it is important to continue to stay safe by wearing a mask, social distancing, and washing your hands.

Q: Is it safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I have an underlying medical condition?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is especially important for people with underlying health problems like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and obesity. People with these conditions are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19. Contact your healthcare provider if you have pre-existing health conditions or specific health concerns regarding you getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Q: Why should I get vaccinated?

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is a way to protect yourself, your family, and your community. It all starts with you. Building defenses against COVID-19 in our community is a team effort. You are a key part of that defense. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine adds one more layer of protection in addition to measures like mask-wearing, social distancing, and diligent hand-washing.