

New Standard COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ Questions

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes, the vaccine is safe. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has a process for ensuring that all vaccines are safe before they can be used in the United States. This process includes clinical trials and approval for both safety and effectiveness. All vaccines made available have undergone clinical trials and approval for both safety and effectiveness.

Can children get the vaccine?

There are no COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for children under the age of 16. COVID-19 vaccination of young children is not currently recommended because of limited data on the vaccine safety and efficacy, although studies are ongoing. Children should still make sure they are up to date on their other important life-saving immunizations.

Where can I get a vaccine?

The following websites have helpful info and tools to help you find out where to get a vaccine:

- www.vaccinefinder.org
- www.vaccines.gov/get-vaccinated/where
- <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/immunize/vaccine-hubs.aspx>
- <https://getthevaccine.dshs.texas.gov/s/>

You can also learn more from healthcare providers, state and local health agencies, pharmacies, through public announcements, and traditional and social media sources.

How many doses are needed to be effective?

It is recommended to confirm with the vaccine administrator which manufacturer was administered and how many doses will be necessary. Upon receipt of the initial dose, it is also recommended to request a completed COVID-19 vaccination record card for your personal records. Vaccination providers must complete these cards with accurate vaccine information (i.e. vaccine manufacturer, lot number, date of first dose administration, and second dose due date), and give them to each patient who receives vaccine to ensure a basic vaccination record is provided.

How much will the vaccine cost?

There will be no cost for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Can I get COVID-19 infection directly as a result of receiving the vaccine?

No. The live COVID-19 virus is not present in any vaccine currently available and there is no risk from becoming infected as a direct result of receiving the vaccine.

Will I still need to wear a mask, practice social distancing, wash my hands, and limit my exposure to others after I get a vaccine?

The CDC has issued guidance on what you can do once you become fully vaccinated. For the most updated information, visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>. The CDC also generally recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases. They include:

- Wash your hands often with plain soap and water. The CDC recommends washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, the CDC recommends using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Learn more about safely using hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering or non-surgical mask when around others. Find more information about how to select, wear, and clean your mask.
- Avoid crowds and practice social distancing (stay at least 6 feet apart from others).

I already had COVID-19 and recovered. Do I still need to get a vaccine?

Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the possibility of reinfection, you should be vaccinated even if you have had COVID-19. This is because experts don't yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19.

If you have COVID-19 you should wait to get vaccinated until you are no longer sick and are not in isolation. Talk to your doctor if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

If I am pregnant, can I get the COVID-19 shot?

Yes, if you are pregnant, you can safely get the shot. Due to the way COVID-19 shots work, experts don't think there is a risk for pregnant people. There aren't a lot of studies in pregnant people. To date, they have not found any safety concerns for pregnant people. Clinical studies to look at the safety and how well the shot works in pregnant people are being done now and more are planned.

You should speak to your healthcare doctor to help you decide whether to get vaccinated. Each patient is different. Talking to your doctor is not needed before you get a shot, but it is a good idea.

If I am nursing my baby, can I get the COVID-19 shot?

Yes. Nursing mothers were not involved in the studies, but experts think that COVID-19 shots should be given to nursing moms who are able to take the shot. The benefits of getting the shot is thought to be more than the risk of not getting one. You do not need to stop nursing to get the COVID-19 shot(s). You can keep breast feeding after you get the COVID-19 shot.