COVID-19 vaccine basics

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and work

A vaccine is designed to prevent diseases. COVID-19 vaccines tell your body how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines help protect you from COVID-19 disease. If you do get sick with COVID-19 after being vaccinated, it is less likely that you will get very sick or have to go to the hospital. Everyone age 6 months and older should get vaccinated.

The COVID-19 vaccines were carefully tested in a diverse group before being authorized for emergency use. Tens of thousands of Black, Latinx, American Indian, and Asian people participated in the Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax vaccine studies. We know that these communities, along with our disability and LGBTQ+ communities, are often excluded from the benefits of medicine and experience ongoing and historical racism, medical trauma, and abuse. These factors worsen the impact of COVID-19 for these communities and emphasize the importance that the vaccine works and is safe for all.

No safety steps were skipped in the making of the COVID-19 vaccines. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) required safety data for the vaccines to be authorized. Additionally, medical researchers continue to monitor the vaccines for safety.

What to expect when you get the vaccine

- People trained to give the vaccine will tell you about the process, discuss any potential risks or side effects, and answer questions.
- All people age 6 months and older should receive at least one updated (bivalent) mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. The mRNA vaccines are Pfizer or Moderna.
- Children 6 months through 5 years may need multiple doses to be up to date.
- There are several COVID-19 vaccines available. The number of doses you need will depend on your age, the vaccine you first received, and whether you have certain health conditions that weaken your immune system.
- It is important to get all vaccine doses recommended for you to have the best protection against COVID-19. For more information visit CDC: Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html).
- You will receive a vaccine card when you get your vaccine. This will have which vaccine you received. The person giving you the vaccine can tell you if you need to get another dose.
- You will be monitored after you get the vaccine for any serious side effects.
Side effects

Some people have side effects after getting the vaccine. Side effects usually last one or two days and usually do not prevent you from daily activities. You may have:

- A sore arm
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Fever/chills

If you have serious side effects, go to a hospital, or call 911.

The vaccine does not contain

- Preservatives
- Pork products or gelatin
- Egg
- COVID-19 live virus

Why should you get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Support your community. Protect those who cannot be vaccinated (very young children) or do not respond well to vaccination (those with weakened immune systems).
- Vaccine is FREE for everyone. Insurance and immigration status does not matter.
- For tips on making an appointment, visit COVID-19 Vaccine for Children and Teens (mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/vaxforkids/) or to find a vaccine location visit Find My Vaccine (mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/index.jsp).