Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine: What You Should Know

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) instead of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

Why were the recommendations updated?

Experts identified that the rare blood clotting problem happening after the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccination caused a few deaths. While this is rare, it is very serious, and there are other vaccines available that do not have this same risk.

Experts updated recommendations after reviewing current research on how well Johnson & Johnson works, and its safety. They continue to review all the vaccines for safety and if needed, update their recommendations based on that research. Any unusual or unexpected patterns of rare serious side effects are checked and addressed, and people are kept informed.

What if I already got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

You are unlikely to still develop the rare clotting condition from the Johnson & Johnson vaccine if more than a month has passed since you got the vaccine.

If it has been less than a month, watch for these symptoms:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Leg swelling
- Abdominal/stomach pain that doesn’t go away
- Severe headaches or headaches that won’t go away
- Blurred vision
- Easy bruising or tiny blood spots under the skin beyond the site of the injection

If you have any of these symptoms after getting the vaccine, you should seek medical attention right away. Tell the health care provider that you recently received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine protects against serious illness from COVID-19; however, people who got one shot of Johnson & Johnson vaccine still need to stay up to date and get a booster shot two months after their first shot. Either Pfizer or Moderna is recommended for the booster shot.
Do I need to get a different vaccine?

You do not need to start over with a different vaccine if your first shot was Johnson & Johnson.

If you have not had a booster, you need one two months after your first Johnson & Johnson shot. Either Pfizer or Moderna is recommended for your booster shot.

If you already got a Johnson & Johnson booster and your first dose was also Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, you may get a second booster four months after your first booster shot. Either Pfizer or Moderna is recommended.

Can I still get Johnson & Johnson vaccine if I want it?

You can still get Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine if that is the vaccine you want. Be aware that anyone may develop rare blood clots after getting the vaccine. However, clots happen most often in females ages 30-49. Talk with your vaccine provider about the vaccine and its possible risks.