



# 13 Things to Know About the COVID-19 Vaccine

## 1. Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Learn about how federal partners and stakeholders are working collaboratively to [ensure the safety of COVID-19 vaccines](#), including information on clinical trials, safety monitoring and more. <sup>1</sup>

## 2. Who determines who should be vaccinated first?

The CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) are guiding decisions and determining how to distribute limited initial supplies of COVID-19 vaccine. Presently, vaccine distribution is under the authority of the departments of public health and local governments. Find ACIP recommendations [here](#). <sup>1</sup>

## 3. How do I learn about what is happening in my state?

Each state is handling the immunization process in their own way based on regional and local needs. This is an evolving situation and subject to change as inventory grows over time. Here's a site for [local state plans](#).

## 4. Are two doses required for everyone?

Depending on the specific vaccine you get, a second shot 3-4 weeks after your first shot is needed to get the most protection the vaccine has to offer against this serious disease. Additional vaccines that are currently in clinical trials may reduce the number of doses necessary.

## 5. Are there medications that I should avoid before receiving a COVID-19 vaccine?

It is recommended that individuals taking any medications, including over the counter medicines, consult their physician prior to getting the vaccine.

Some evidence indicates that certain medications should be avoided for a specified period of time before receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, including:

✘ **Steroid/Cortisone Shots:** You cannot receive the COVID vaccine until 1 week after a steroid/cortisone shot.

✘ **Ibuprofen:** You cannot receive the COVID vaccine until 2 days after your last ibuprofen medication.

✘ **Antibiotics:** Antibiotics are known to reduce the effects of vaccines, particularly the flu vaccine. Because of COVID-19's similarities to influenza, it is important to talk to your healthcare provider about getting the vaccine after completing your antibiotic treatment.

## 6. What should I expect after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

It's possible to have some side effects, which are normal responses that your body is building protection. Common side effects include pain and swelling on the arm that received the shot. It's also possible to have fever, chills, tiredness or a headache, which are more common after receiving the second dose. <sup>2</sup>

If you are experiencing pain or discomfort, talk to your physician about taking an over-the-counter medicine. [Learn more information about what to expect after getting a vaccine.](#)





CDC has developed a new tool, **v-safe**, as an additional layer of safety monitoring to increase our ability to rapidly detect any safety issues with COVID-19 vaccines. V-safe is a smartphone-based, after-vaccination health checker for people who receive COVID-19 vaccines.

### 7. How much should I expect to pay for a COVID-19 vaccine?

Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers may be able to charge administration fees for giving the shot. Vaccination providers can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the [Health Resources and Services Administration's Provider Relief Fund](#).<sup>3</sup>

### 8. Do I have to keep wearing a mask and practicing physical distancing?

Yes, it's important that everyone continues diligent health and safety practices to stop this pandemic, especially as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. Continue to wear a mask, avoid large crowds, wash your hands often and stay at least 6 feet away from others.<sup>1</sup>

### 9. Will I test positive for COVID-19 on a viral test after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

No. Neither the recently authorized and recommended vaccines nor the other COVID-19 vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States cause you to test positive on [viral tests](#), which are used to see if you have a **current infection**.<sup>3</sup>

### 10. After a COVID-19 vaccine, will I test positive on an antibody test?

It's possible. The goal of vaccination is to elicit an immune response from your body, so 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. Researchers are looking at how the COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.<sup>3</sup>

### 11. If I have had COVID-19, do I need to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, it is recommended that individuals that have had COVID-19 still get the vaccine. However, if you have had a recent infection you shouldn't be at the top of the list for vaccines. Experts don't know exactly how long protection lasts after illness so it's recommended that you talk to your physician about the best timing to receive the vaccine based on your situation.

### 12. Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?

No, the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines do not change or alter an individual's DNA.<sup>3</sup>

### 13. Can I get multiple vaccines (shingles, pneumonia, influenza) at the same time?

While all vaccines are important, receiving more than one vaccine at the same time may have several side effects that can make you uncomfortable and make it difficult to quickly resume normal daily activities. For this reason, it is important to work with your healthcare provider and discuss your health conditions prior to getting multiple vaccines (shingles, pneumonia, flu) at one time.

## FIND A VACCINE

[vaccinefinder.org](#) helps you find vaccination providers in your area. You can search for a wide variety of routinely recommended and travel-related vaccines. **While COVID-19 vaccines are now available in limited quantities, VaccineFinder will be updated once COVID-19 vaccination is widely available to the public.**

For information directly from your state's health department, click on the State/Territory button under "How Do I Get a Vaccine?" on the CDC [Covid-19 Vaccination Reporting page](#).

#### Sources:

1. [8 Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
2. [What to Expect After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
3. [Facts About COVID-19 Vaccines](#)