

COVID-19 Vaccination Factsheet

Updated: 3/11/2021

COVID-19 is killing millions of people, especially people of color. The good news is that we now have safe and effective vaccines. These vaccines teach your body to develop natural defenses to fight the virus. Getting more than 75% of our community vaccinated is our best chance of ending public health policies like distancing and masking. This will help stop the spread of the virus. Get the vaccine to protect yourself, your family, and our community. Below are 10 facts about the vaccines. For information specific to the vaccines currently in use, please visit the FDA website: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>

1. The COVID-19 vaccine trials were the largest and most thorough vaccine trials ever.

Caution: You may hear concerns that the trials were rushed. You may also hear that mRNA technology is new or untested.

Vaccine experts around the world worked together to develop these vaccines. mRNA vaccines and other coronavirus vaccines have been studied for over 10 years. So, we had a head start. **All trials followed the required safety protocols and were approved by the FDA.**

2. The COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in preventing severe disease.

Caution: You might hear that the approved vaccines differ in effectiveness..

All authorized COVID-19 vaccines are 100% effective in preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19. If your vaccine is two doses, you do need both doses and adequate time for the immune system to respond for full protection. Recent data also suggest that mRNA vaccines reduce asymptomatic infection and transmission, which is critical for ending the pandemic.

3. The COVID-19 vaccines are very safe.

Caution: You might hear concerns about adverse events due to vaccination.

Very large vaccine studies, with over 70,000 people, have shown the COVID-19 vaccines are very safe. **Posted on March 10, 2021, by National Public Radio, “Since vaccine distribution began in the U.S. on Dec 14, more than 93 million doses have been administered, reaching 18.4% of the total U.S. population, according to federal data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The U.S. is currently administering over 2.1 million shots a day.”** No deaths have been attributed to the COVID-19 vaccines, while over 500,000 deaths in the US have been attributed to COVID-19 infection. We are seeing negative long-term effects of COVID-19 infections, including lung, brain, and heart damage. This makes it more important to get vaccinated.

4. The vaccines were tested among diverse populations.

Caution: You may hear that the vaccines were not tested among racial and ethnic minorities.

The vaccine trials made sure that the numbers of Black and Latinx participants are in line with national percentages. Phase III clinical trial participants included 20% Hispanic/Latinx and 10% Black in the Moderna trials, 13% Hispanic/Latinx and 10% Black in the Pfizer trials, and 15% Hispanic/Latinx and 13% Black in the Johnson & Johnson trials. **The vaccines work just as well and were just as safe in all racial and ethnic groups.**

5. Vaccines tell your immune system how to spot a protein on the virus that causes COVID-19 and create an "army" to attack it.

Caution: You might hear concerns that the vaccine causes COVID-19.

The vaccines provide information to the immune system on only one viral protein. When your body sees the protein from the vaccine again, either with a second vaccine dose or from infection, your "army" attacks it. **If you get fevers, chills, and muscle aches within a couple of days of a second vaccine dose, it is a sign that the vaccine is working but you are NOT actually sick with COVID.**

6. If you have allergies to foods, medications, or other vaccines, you can be vaccinated.

Caution: You may hear that you should not get vaccinated if you have allergies to food, medicines, or other vaccines.

Of the first 20 million people vaccinated in the US, only 21 people had severe allergic reactions. This is very rare. CDC recommends that people get vaccinated even if they have a history of

severe allergic reactions not related to vaccines or injectable medications—such as food, pet, venom, environmental, or latex allergies. **People with a history of allergies to oral medications or a family history of severe allergic reactions may also get vaccinated.** Check with your medical provider if you are unsure.

7. If you had a COVID-19 infection you should still be vaccinated.

Caution: You might hear that you do not need to be vaccinated if you had COVID-19.

You should get vaccinated because antibody protection after getting COVID-19 only lasts a few months and the vaccines stimulate a more consistent antibody response than is stimulated by infection. Studies showed that **the vaccine still helps those who had COVID-19.**

8. Women who are pregnant or nursing can get the vaccine.

Caution: You may hear that pregnant and nursing mothers are not eligible for the vaccine.

Pregnant women are at very high risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Women should discuss the risks and benefits of vaccination with their doctor. **If you are pregnant and/or nursing and you want the vaccine, you can get it.**

9. The vaccine is safe for people with weakened immune systems.

Caution: You might hear that those who have weakened immune systems (or immunocompromised) are at risk for getting COVID-19 from the vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccines do NOT contain live virus and cannot cause COVID-19. So, there are no safety concerns in immunocompromised people. This is important because immunocompromised people are at high risk for severe COVID-19 disease. So, it is even more important for people with weakened immune systems to be vaccinated.

10. The vaccine is safe for people with chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

Caution: You may hear that it is not safe for people with medical conditions to get vaccinated.

People with medical conditions like diabetes and heart disease are at high risk for severe COVID-19 infection and were included as vaccine trial participants. It is **very important for people with medical conditions to be vaccinated.** Please check with your medical provider for information specific to any chronic medical conditions you may have.