

COVID-19 Vaccine Information

The COVID-19 vaccines are well tested.

The COVID-19 vaccine lowers your chance of catching COVID-19 and greatly lowers your chance of getting very sick from it.

Like most medicines, no vaccine is 100% protective. It takes about 2 weeks for your body to build up protection. If you are vaccinated and still catch COVID-19, you are:

- Much less likely to need the hospital
- Much less likely to need the ICU
- Much less likely to need a breathing machine
- Much less likely to die from COVID-19

Studies also show that vaccinated people have:

- Lower risk of stroke
- Lower risk of heart problems
- Lower risk of blood clots
- Lower risk of “long COVID” (symptoms lasting for months after infection)

Common side effects

Not everyone gets them. They usually last 1–3 days.

- Fever
- Pain, redness, or firmness at the shot site
- Headache
- Muscle or joint aches
- Tiredness (fatigue)
- Nausea or vomiting
- Chills
- Swollen glands under the arm on the same side as the shot (harmless, may last longer)

What to do if you feel bad

- Rest, drink fluids, and use over-the-counter pain or fever medicine if safe for you.
 - If you're unsure, acetaminophen carries the least risk for many health conditions.
 - Follow dosing instructions. If in doubt, start at the lowest dose or ask a doctor.
- Place a cool cloth on any area of irritation and move that area often.
- Call your doctor or visit a walk-in clinic if symptoms last more than 2 days, get worse, or if you are worried.

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Rare side effects

These are very rare. COVID-19 illness itself carries a much higher risk for all of them. If you notice the early signs below, get medical care right away.

Allergic reactions (any vaccine type)

- Timing: within minutes to 4 hours after the shot
- Risk: about 5 per 1 million doses
- Signs: trouble breathing, wheezing, chest tightness, swelling of mouth, fainting, hives
- Care: Emergency

Clotting problems and low platelets (J&J vaccine; not seen with Pfizer/Moderna)

- Timing: 5–30 days after the shot
- Risk: about 7 per 1 million in women 18–49; seen less in others
- Signs: severe headache, vision changes, shortness of breath, chest pain, belly pain, leg swelling, easy bruising, pinpoint rash with bleeding
- Care: Emergency

Guillain–Barré syndrome (J&J vaccine; not seen with Pfizer/Moderna)

- Timing: 1–5 weeks after the shot
- Risk: about 8 per 1 million doses of J&J
- Signs: weakness or tingling in the legs or arms, trouble walking, shortness of breath
- Care: Urgent
- Treatment: medicines to calm the immune system, supportive care
- Prognosis: usually good, but recovery can take weeks to months

Myocarditis / Pericarditis (Pfizer, Moderna, Novavax vaccines)

- Timing: within 1 week (risk decreases with later doses); most common in males 12–29
- Risk: about 25–50 per 1 million; very rare in older adults; more rare with Novavax
- Signs: chest pain, fainting, feeling very tired, shortness of breath, lower exercise tolerance
- Care: Urgent
- Treatment: rest, anti-inflammatory medicines, monitoring (sometimes in the hospital)
- Prognosis: most recover well; rare severe cases reported. COVID-19 itself causes myocarditis more often and more severely.

For full vaccine information, including ingredients:

[FDA.gov/media/151707/download](https://www.fda.gov/media/151707/download)