



COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ

January 18, 2021

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

There are many questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. This document is designed to help you get a better understanding of the vaccine's efficacy, safety, distribution, and more. Information is dynamic and fluid, so please continue to check in for updates.

Check for Local Updates

Please always check your local public health agency for the latest area-specific updates on vaccine distribution.

Q: Will insurance cover the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: If you are covered by an employer sponsored plan, your insurance will cover the vaccine at no cost. Please visit your health plan website to learn more about the latest updates.

Q: Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

A: Vaccination services are conducted in compliance with the Center for Disease and Prevention's (CDC) Guidance for Immunization Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic for safe delivery of vaccine. Vaccines have been approved for emergency use by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA).

Q: Why get a vaccine?

A: A vaccine is designed to help your body build an immune response to the virus. It does not give you a guarantee that you will not contract the virus or infect others. The goal is to reduce the risk of a more serious response (i.e. hospitalization) to COVID-19. Safety measures such as physical distancing, wearing masks/face coverings should still be adhered.

Q: What vaccines are available now?

A: There are two vaccines that have been approved for US distribution: Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna. The vaccines have shown a 95% efficacy.

FDA Vaccine Face Sheets:

- Pfizer: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>
- Moderna: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download>

Q: How many shots will I need?

A: At this time, Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna require 2 shots.

- Pfizer/BioNTech: The 2nd shot will be administered 3 weeks after the first shot.
- Moderna: The 2nd shot will be administered 1 month after the first shot.

There are more vaccines under review and information will be continually evolving in this category. At this time, vaccines require extremely cold temperatures for storage and 2 shots which can be challenging.

Q: When can I get my vaccine?

A: Vaccine supply is currently limited and therefore a phased approach is adopted according to who is at greatest risk. In general, the U.S. Government has established the following phases, however individual states and local health departments may modify the priority groups.

Supply and logistics play a large role and we highly recommend you visit your local county health department for information on vaccine availability. Counties are partnering with technology to help you sign up for vaccine notification, so check in with your local community.

Vaccine Priority Groups**

Phase 1a (24 million people)

- Health care personnel
- Long-term care facility residents

Phase 1b (49 million people)

- Frontline essential workers
- People 75 and older

Phase 1c (129 million people)

- People ages 65-74
- People ages 16-64 with high-risk conditions
- Other essential workers

Phase 2

- People 16 and older not in Phase 1

PHASE 1:

As of January 13, 2021, the US is in Phase 1a with some communities in a hybrid of Phase 1b.

PHASE 2:

The general population, Phase 2, has been expected to be inoculated in Spring 2021. Depending on many variables (i.e. new administration, healthcare staffing, COVID surges, new vaccine) this can change. It is very important to understand the situation is fluid and ever changing. **We strongly recommend you check with your local county health department to stay updated and check in on the phase your community is in.**

Q: How do I prove I'm an Essential Worker and fall into the priority status for distribution?

A: Check with the local health department as the definition of essential worker may vary from state to state. In most cases, if required, you may require proof of employment such as:

- Letter from your employer
- ID badge or documentation verifying your employment
- Pay stub

Depending on the phase and criteria, proper identification showing you are eligible for the vaccine should be considered.

Q: Is my employer coordinating the vaccination?

A: At this time, no. Vaccinations are being handled at the state and county level at designated sites which may include your doctor's office, pharmacies, hospitals, etc. If your employer is a healthcare provider, they would be coordinating the vaccinations for staff. Talk to your doctor to discuss if you have any underlying conditions and whether you may have an allergic reaction which may prohibit you from taking the vaccine.

Information is very fluid and if your employer or health plan has new information, look for an update.

Q: Where do I get the vaccine? Do I call my regular doctor or do I go to the County Health Department?

A: Check with your local county health department to know what phase and where they are in the vaccination process. Many counties are adopting technology tools to help you sign up to receive notifications. For example, in Southern California, Orange County is partnering with Othena and Long Beach, VaxLB. Northern California has encouraged residents to contact their local health department.

You can also contact your doctor's office if they have vaccines available or if you have questions regarding your eligibility. In some cases, your health plan may notify you of vaccine availability.

Q: What does it mean to have FDA Emergency Use Authorization & how does it work?

A: In order to help make a vaccine available as soon as possible, the FDA would need to authorize its distribution under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). The agency has issued guidance for the criteria that will be used to evaluate any EUA application.

The FDA evaluates the following criteria when determining whether to issue an EUA:

- **Safety:** Whether the chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) agent can cause a serious or life-threatening disease or condition. The known and potential benefits of the product, when used to diagnose, prevent or treat the identified serious or life-threatening disease or condition, outweigh the known and potential risks of the product.
- **Efficacy:** If the product is determined to be effective in preventing infection by SARS-CoV-2.
- There is no adequate, approved and available alternative to the product for diagnosing, preventing or treating the disease or condition.

Under the EUA, any investigational vaccines developed to prevent COVID-19 will be assessed on a case-by-case basis considering the target population, the characteristics of the product, the preclinical and human clinical study data on the product and the totality of the available scientific evidence relevant to the product. *Source: CVS Health Vaccine FAQ*

Q: How was the vaccine development for COVID-19 approved so quickly?

A: Vaccine development is a lengthy, expensive process and can take up to 15 years. The fastest vaccine ever to be developed until now was for mumps – and that took nearly five years. Because of the cost and high failure rates, developers typically follow a linear sequence of steps, with multiple pauses for data analysis or manufacturing-process checks.

However, with this pandemic, manufacturers have been able to speed up vaccine development.

Research has long been in development

Data from SARS-CoV-1 and MERS-CoV vaccine development saved time and the initial step of exploratory vaccine design was accelerated.

Government Involvement

The government invoked emergency authority to enable manufacturing to start alongside clinical trials. Manufacturing is usually scaled substantially after trials have concluded, but Operation Warp Speed has enabled manufacturers to de-risk and build manufacturing alongside clinical trials.

Pandemic Cases

The higher rates of infection from this virus and more trial participants have enabled manufacturers to recruit participants and demonstrate efficacy more quickly.

Cutting-edge approaches

New manufacturing technologies have helped accelerate production.

Source: CVS Health Vaccine FAQ



What Next?

There can be significant changes in the speed at which the population has access to the vaccine. Two changes are the new Administration under President Elect Biden and new vaccines to hit the market. The Biden Administration is in favor of releasing all available vaccines to states and possibly creating Federal vaccination centers to complement the state responses. The vaccines currently widely used, Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna both require storage in extremely cold temperatures and two shots which are challenging and lengthy. If a vaccine with one dose and normal storage is available, this could change the strategy dramatically. Please stay informed, be patient and continue to remain positive.

Caution: Beware of Scams

Please be careful and protect yourself against fraud and counterfeit vaccines. Here are tips to avoid scams:

- Consult with your doctor
- Do not purchase COVID-19 vaccines or treatment over the Internet or online pharmacy
- Beware if there is any costs required to get the vaccine or obtain early access to vaccine
- Ignore advertisements from all communications (social media, email, calls, online) if they are from unsolicited or unknown sources

Source: <https://www.fbi.gov/coronavirus>

Helpful Videos:

- ✓ **CVS Health:** <https://payorsolutions.cvshealth.com/insights/covid-19-update-vaccination-webinar>
- ✓ **Cigna:** https://event.webcasts.com/viewer/event.jsp?ei=1417276&tp_key=f10c59b3f5

Resources:

- ✓ **California Vaccine Plan:** <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines/>
- ✓ Search Online for your **County Health Department** for the latest vaccine update
- ✓ **Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP):** <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/covid-19.html>
- ✓ **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):**
 - Vaccines: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>
 - Recommendation: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations.html>
- ✓ **FDA Vaccine Fact Sheets:**
 - Pfizer: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>
 - Moderna: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download>

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