COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes, the vaccine is safe. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has a process for ensuring that all vaccines are safe before they can be used in the United States. All vaccines made available have undergone clinical trials and approval for both safety and effectiveness.

Can children get the vaccine?

There are no COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for children under the age of 16. COVID-19 vaccination of young children is not currently recommended because of limited data on the vaccine safety and efficacy, although studies are ongoing. Parents and guardians should still make sure their children are up-to-date on their other important life-saving immunizations.

Where can I get a vaccine?

The following websites have helpful information and tools to help you find out where to get a vaccine:

- www.vaccinefinder.org
- www.vaccines.gov/get-vaccinated/where
- https://vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov/
- https://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov/

You can also learn more from health care providers, state and local health agencies, pharmacies, through public announcements, and traditional and social media sources.

How many doses are needed to be effective?

It is recommended to confirm with the vaccine administrator which manufacturer was administered and how many doses will be necessary. Upon receipt of the initial dose, it is also recommended to request a completed COVID-19 vaccination record card for your personal records. Vaccination providers must complete these cards with accurate vaccine information (i.e. vaccine manufacturer, lot number, date of first dose administration, and second dose due date) and give them to each patient who receives the vaccine to ensure a basic vaccination record is provided.

How much will the vaccine cost?

There will be no cost for the COVID-19 vaccine.

What are the side effects of receiving the vaccine?

During the FDA's review and approval process, safety and effectiveness are evaluated. After getting vaccinated, you may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. The most common side effects are pain and swelling in the arm where you received the vaccine. In addition, you may have fever, chills, tiredness and headache. Most side effects are generally mild and last a few days.

Can I get COVID-19 infection directly as a result of receiving the vaccine?

No. The live COVID-19 virus is not present in any vaccine currently available, and there is no risk of becoming infected as a direct result of receiving the vaccine. After getting vaccinated, you may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. The most common side effects are pain and swelling in the arm where you received the vaccine. In addition, you may have fever, chills, tiredness and headache. Most side effects are generally mild and last a few days.

Will I still need to wear a mask, practice social distancing, wash my hands and limit my exposure to others after I get a vaccine?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued guidance on what you can do once you become fully vaccinated. For the most updated information, visit the CDC website at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html. The CDC also generally recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases. They include:

- Wash your hands often with plain soap and water. The CDC recommends washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, the CDC recommends using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Learn more about safely using hand sanitizer on the FDA's website at https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/safely-using-hand-sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering or non-surgical mask when around others. Find more information about how to select, wear and clean your mask on the CDC's website at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html.
- Avoid crowds and practice social distancing (stay at least 6 feet apart from others).

I already had COVID-19 and recovered. Do I still need to get a vaccine?

Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the possibility of reinfection, you should be vaccinated even if you have had COVID-19. This is because experts don't yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19.

If you have COVID-19, you should wait to get vaccinated until you are no longer sick and are not in isolation. The CDC recommends that if you were treated for COVID-19 with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you received or if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

If I am pregnant, can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, if you are pregnant, you can safely get the vaccine. Due to the way COVID-19 vaccines work, experts don't think there is a risk for people who are pregnant. Although there are not a lot of studies involving people who are pregnant, medical experts have not found any safety concerns for pregnant people. Clinical studies to look at the safety and how well the vaccine works in pregnant people are being done now and more are planned.

You should speak to your healthcare provider to help you decide whether to get vaccinated. Each patient is different. Talking to your doctor is not needed before you get the vaccine, but it is a good idea.

If I am nursing my baby, can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Nursing mothers were not involved in the studies, but experts think the COVID-19 vaccine should be given to nursing moms who are able to receive the vaccine. The benefits of getting the vaccine is thought to be more than the risk of not getting it. You do not need to stop nursing to get the COVID-19 vaccine. You can keep breastfeeding after you get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Did the CDC and FDA pause the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

On April 13, 2021, the CDC and FDA recommended a temporary pause in using the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine due to a rare and severe type of blood clot reported in six individuals in the U.S. The CDC and FDA lifted the pause on the vaccine on April 23, 2021 based on the recommendation from the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization (ACIP). Providers are permitted to resume administering J&J vaccines in Ohio. View the Ohio Department of Health's news release for additional information.

What symptoms should I look for if I have received the J&J vaccine?

Be aware of any symptoms you develop within a month of receiving the J&J vaccine.

If you develop a severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, shortness of breath (or any other symptoms that you think might be related to your vaccination) within three weeks of being vaccinated, you should seek medical treatment from your doctor, go to an urgent care clinic or go to the emergency room. Let the doctors know you were recently vaccinated with the J&J vaccine.

Your risk of developing a blood clot after a month is extremely low.

Health care providers are asked to report adverse events to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System at https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html.