

# COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

## Facing COVID-19 Together

### Staying healthy!

#### **Will the COVID-19 vaccination help keep me from getting COVID-19?**

Yes. Vaccines work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Getting vaccinated may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Stopping the pandemic requires using all the tools we have available.

#### **Can this vaccine give me COVID-19?**

No. This vaccine works by teaching our cells to make a harmless piece of a “spike protein,” which is found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19. This helps your body recognize the virus so it can fight it off in the future.

### Staying Safe!

#### **Is the vaccine safe?**

Yes. We understand that some people may be concerned about getting vaccinated. Safety is the first priority. The process used to approve COVID-19 vaccines, is the same proven process that was used to create safe and effective vaccines for the flu, polio, measles, whooping cough and more. FDA determined that three COVID-19 vaccines met FDA’s safety and effectiveness standards and granted those vaccines Emergency Use Authorization (EAUs). This allowed the vaccines to be quickly distributed to control the pandemic. FDA has now granted full approval for Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for people ages 5 years and older and for Moderna vaccine for people ages 18 years and older.

## **How can a safe vaccine be made so quickly?**

Vaccine development typically takes many years. However, scientists had already begun research for coronavirus vaccines during previous outbreaks caused by related coronaviruses (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome). That earlier research provided a head start for rapid development of vaccines to protect against infection with COVID-19. No steps were skipped in the development of this vaccine, but modifications to the process were made to shorten the timeline without sacrificing safety.

## **Does the vaccine have any side effects?**

After the COVID-19 vaccination, you may have some mild side effects. This is a normal sign that your body is building protection. Like with a flu shot, some people have reported mild fatigue, headache, body aches, chills and pain at the injection site for a day or two.

## **Is the vaccine safe for people that have allergies?**

Yes. Most people who have food or environmental allergies can still get the vaccine. Prior to getting the vaccine, please talk to your health care provider if you have had any severe reactions to medicines or vaccines in the past.

## **How do I know which sources of COVID-19 vaccine information are accurate?**

It can be difficult to know which sources of information you can trust. The internet, unfortunately, can be filled with dangerous misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines. The best thing you can do is educate yourself about the vaccines with trustworthy information. Learn more about finding credible vaccine information from the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>.

## **What to Expect?**

### **What vaccines are currently available?**

There are now three vaccines available: Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson.

### **Do any of the vaccines require more than one dose to be effective?**

Yes. Two doses are needed, a few weeks apart, from the same manufacturer for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

- Request a completed COVID-19 vaccination record card and keep it safe for your records.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires a single dose to be effective.

### **Is there a cost to get vaccinated or boosted?**

No. The vaccine is FREE for everyone 5 years and older.

## How long does protection from a COVID-19 vaccine last?

Currently, MDHHS recommends that everyone age 12 years and older get a booster shot after completing their initial series of shots.

- People who received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine for their initial immunization should get a booster shot at least 5 months after completion.
- People who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine should get a booster shot at least 2 months after getting their first shot. The Pfizer or Moderna vaccine is recommended for the booster.
- Teens 12-17 years of age may only get a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine booster.
- Immunocompromised individuals and individuals over the age of 50 who received an initial booster dose at least 4 months ago are also eligible for another booster of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

## Vaccine Distribution

### Who is currently eligible for the vaccine and booster?

Currently, Michigan residents 5 years and older are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. A booster dose is recommended for everyone except children ages 5 through 11. A booster dose is designed to help people maintain immunity longer.

For more information about the vaccine, boosters and vaccine locations, please visit [www.michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine](http://www.michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine).

### Can children get the vaccine?

Currently, MDHHS recommends everyone 5 years and older get a COVID-19 vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine is approved for use in children. Children ages 5-11 may receive the pediatric Pfizer vaccine. Children 12 years and older may receive the Pfizer vaccine.

### Are minority populations prioritized to receive the vaccine or booster?

Yes. The state uses the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) indicators to help prioritize distribution of scarce resources such as COVID-19 testing sites and vaccinations to ensure effectiveness and equity for all Michiganders.

### Where can I get the vaccine?

Visit [www.Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine](http://www.Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine) for information on where to make an appointment at available healthcare providers and local health agencies. If you need help scheduling your vaccine appointment, please call 2-1-1 or the COVID Hotline at **(888) 535-6136**. Vaccine availability may vary by county.

## Important Things to Remember

### If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. You should still get the COVID-19 vaccine, even if you have had COVID-19. There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again.

### What should I do if I am Pregnant?

MDHHS is advising that pregnancy is listed as one of the conditions that put women at increased risk for severe COVID-19 related illness. Please contact your provider to discuss the vaccine and if you should get the vaccination.

In addition, MotherToBaby experts are available to answer questions in English or Spanish by phone or chat. The free and confidential service is available Monday-Friday 8am-5pm (local time). To reach MotherToBaby, you can call **1-866-626-6847**, or go to their website to use the Live Chat or send them an **email: [mothertobaby.org/ask-an-expert/](mailto:mothertobaby.org/ask-an-expert/)**.

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

Yes. Nursing mothers were not involved in the studies, but experts believe that COVID-19 shots should be given to nursing moms who are able to take the shot. The benefits of getting the shot is thought to be more than the risk of not getting one. You do not need to stop nursing to get the COVID-19 shot(s). You can keep breast feeding after you get the COVID-19 shot.

### If I have a problem or bad reaction after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, how do I report it?

V-Safe is a smartphone-based tool available to quickly tell the CDC if you have any side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Register by visiting [vsafe.cdc.gov](https://vsafe.cdc.gov). The CDC also runs VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Event Report System) to monitor these adverse events. Visit the website to learn more about reporting: [www.vaers.hhs.gov](https://www.vaers.hhs.gov).

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