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COVID-19 VACCINATION FAQs

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has prepared a list of FAQs to help educate the public on various aspects of COVID-19 vaccination. This article features some of these FAQs.

Vaccine Development

How many COVID-19 vaccines are under development?

Currently, [two vaccines](#) are authorized and recommended to prevent COVID-19:

- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Multiple COVID-19 vaccines are also still under development. Large-scale (Phase 3) clinical trials are in progress or being planned for two additional COVID-19 vaccines in the United States.

Has there been a coronavirus vaccine developed before?

What's known about it, and can it be helpful today in working toward a COVID-19 vaccine?

When a new flu strain is identified, like H1N1 in 2009, vaccine manufacturers can use the same processes that are used to make the annual seasonal flu vaccine, saving valuable time. Unlike flu viruses, coronaviruses do not yet have licensed vaccines or processes to build on. In addition, the virus that causes COVID-19 is a new virus, so entirely new vaccines must be developed and tested to ensure they work and are safe. There are many steps in the [vaccine testing and approval process](#). [Multiple agencies and groups in the United States](#) are working together to make sure a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine is available as quickly as possible.

Getting Vaccinated

How many shots of the COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?

The two authorized and recommended vaccines to prevent COVID-19 in the United States both need two shots to be effective. There is one COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 3 clinical trials in the United States that uses one shot.

Do I need to wear a mask when I receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. The CDC recommends that, during the pandemic, people [wear a mask](#) that covers their nose and mouth when in contact with others outside of their household, when in health care facilities and when receiving any vaccine, including a COVID-19 vaccine. Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a mask without assistance should not wear a mask. For more information, visit [considerations for wearing masks](#).

Who is paying for the COVID-19 vaccine?

Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers will be able to charge an administration fee for giving the shot to someone. Vaccine providers can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the Health Resources and

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Services Administration's Provider Relief Fund.

Are there special considerations on who should get the COVID-19 vaccine first?

The CDC is making recommendations for [who should be offered the COVID-19 vaccine first](#) when supplies are limited. To help guide decisions about how to distribute limited initial supplies of COVID-19 vaccines, the CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices have [published recommendations](#) on which groups should be vaccinated first. The goal is for everyone to be able to easily get a COVID-19 vaccination as soon as large quantities of the vaccine are available.

While the CDC makes recommendations for who should be offered a COVID-19 vaccine first, each state has its own plan for vaccine prioritization, distribution and allocation. Please contact your state health department for more information on their planning for COVID-19 vaccines.

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when it's available?

COVID-19 vaccination should be offered to you regardless of whether you already had a COVID-19 infection. You should not be required to have an antibody test before you are vaccinated.

However, anyone currently infected with COVID-19 should wait to get vaccinated until after their illness has resolved and after they have met the [criteria](#) to discontinue isolation.

Additionally, current evidence suggests that reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19 is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection. Therefore, people with a recent infection may delay vaccination until the end of that 90-day period, if desired.

Why would a vaccine be needed if we can do other things, like social distancing and wearing masks, to prevent the virus that causes COVID-19 from spreading?

Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available. Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Other steps, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask and staying at least 6 feet away from

others, help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following the CDC's recommendations [to protect yourself and others](#) will offer the best protection from COVID-19.

Do I need to wear a mask and avoid close contact with others if I have received two doses of the vaccine?

Yes. While experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to us to help stop this pandemic, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from others.

Together, COVID-19 vaccination and following the CDC's recommendations for [how to protect yourself and others](#) will offer the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before changing recommendations on steps everyone should take to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision.

When can I stop wearing a mask and avoiding close contact with others after I have been vaccinated?

There is not enough information currently available to say if or when the CDC will stop recommending that people [wear masks](#) and [avoid close contact with others](#) to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before making that decision. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision.

Are there other vaccines that can help prevent me from getting COVID-19?

There are currently no available vaccines that will prevent COVID-19. However, [multiple agencies and groups in the United States](#) are working together to make sure that a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine is available as quickly as possible.

A flu vaccine will not protect you from getting COVID-19, but it can prevent you from getting the flu at the same time as COVID-19. This can keep you from having a more severe illness. While it's not possible to say with certainty what will happen in the winter, CDC believes it's likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading during that time. That means that getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever.

Does immunity after getting COVID-19 last longer than protection from COVID-19 vaccines?

The protection someone gains from having an infection (called natural immunity) varies depending on the disease, and it varies from person to person. Since this virus is new, we don't know how long natural immunity might last. Current evidence suggests that reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19 is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection.

Regarding vaccination, we won't know how long immunity lasts until we have a vaccine and more data on how well it works.

Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about, and the CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

What percentage of the population needs to get vaccinated to have herd immunity to COVID-19?

Experts do not know what percentage of people would need to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity to COVID-19. Herd immunity is a term used to describe when enough people have protection—either from previous infection or vaccination—that it is unlikely a virus or bacteria can spread and cause disease. As a result, everyone within the community is protected even if some people don't have any protection themselves. The percentage of people who need to have protection in order to achieve herd immunity varies by disease.

Safety

How do I report it if I have a problem or bad reaction after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

The CDC and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) encourage the public to report possible side effects

(called adverse events) to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#). This national system collects these data to look for adverse events that are unexpected, appear to happen more often than expected, or have unusual patterns of occurrence. Learn about the [difference between a vaccine side effect and an adverse event](#). Reports to VAERS help the CDC monitor the safety of vaccines. Safety is a top priority.

Health care providers will be required to report certain adverse events following vaccination to VAERS. Health care providers also have to adhere to any revised safety reporting requirements according to the FDA's conditions of authorized use throughout the duration of any emergency use authorization; these requirements would be posted on the [FDA's website](#).

The CDC is also implementing a new smartphone-based tool called [v-safe](#) to check in on people's health after they receive a COVID-19 vaccine. When you receive your vaccine, you should also receive a v-safe information sheet telling you how to enroll in v-safe. If you enroll, you will receive regular text messages directing you to surveys where you can report any problems or adverse reactions you have after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

Summary

For more information or to view additional FAQs, click [here](#).

Source: CDC