

# COVID-19 VACCINE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

North Carolina has developed a federally approved COVID-19 Vaccine Plan centered on the equitable distribution of the vaccine across the state, based on the most current federal guidance.

## Why should you get vaccinated for COVID-19?

Based on what we know about vaccines for other diseases, experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may help you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19. Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Vaccines will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.

## Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?

At this time, several vaccine candidates are in various stages of testing in humans to ensure they are both safe and effective. The FDA is committed to science and the critical evaluation of all new vaccines for their safety and efficacy in an unbiased way before their authorization for use. We will know more once the clinical trials conclude. It's typical for vaccine candidates not to reach the final stages of testing, so likewise, we do not expect 100 percent of all COVID-19 vaccines under development to become available. Although the vaccines were developed quickly, they were built upon years of work in developing vaccines for similar viruses. Development time was cut without cutting corners. More than 70,000 people participated in clinical trials for two vaccines to see if they are safe and effective. To date, the vaccines are nearly 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 with no safety concerns.

## Is there COVID-19 virus in the vaccine?

There is NO COVID-19 virus in the vaccine. The vaccine imitates the infection so that our bodies think a germ like the virus is attacking. This creates the antibody defenses we need to fight off COVID-19 if or when the real germ attacks.

## What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Mild or moderate side effects include pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle aches/pains, joint pain, chills, nausea/vomiting, axillary swelling/tenderness, fever, swelling at the injection site, and redness at the injection site. Side effects were generally worse after the second dose of the two-dose regimen. Physicians emphasize that the side effects are normal and also a sign that the body is reacting properly to the vaccine. If someone is going to have a bad reaction to a vaccine, it is likely to occur in the first six weeks after vaccination, according to medical experts.

## Can the vaccine cause COVID-19?

COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development. However, the goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

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

At first, there will be a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine. In the initial phase of the COVID-19 vaccination program (Phase 1a) should be offered to both 1) healthcare personnel and 2) residents of long-term care facilities. Healthcare personnel are defined as paid and unpaid people serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials. Long-term care facility residents are defined as adults who reside in facilities that provide a variety of services, including medical and personal care, to persons who are unable to live independently.

## Covid-19 Vaccinations: Your best shot at stopping COVID-19.

YOU HAVE A **SPOT.** TAKE YOUR **SHOT.**

You have a spot, take your shot. A tested, safe and effective vaccine will be available to all who want it, but supplies will be limited at first. To save lives and slow the spread of COVID-19, independent state and federal public health advisory committees recommend first protecting health care workers caring for patients with COVID-19, people who are at the highest risk of being hospitalized or dying, and those at high risk of exposure to COVID-19. Keep practicing the 3 W's—wear a mask, wait six feet apart, wash your hands—until everyone has a chance to get vaccinated.



For more information:  
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## I'm interested in getting the vaccine, how do I sign up?

Due to the limited number of vaccines at this time, the infographic above reflects who will be eligible for receiving the vaccines. At the time in which vaccine will be made available to community members, a link will be provided. That link will connect you to CVMS (COVID Vaccine Management System). This site is the portal in which you will register for the vaccine. The portal will provide you with guidance as to whether you qualify at the time or if not yet. As soon as the link is available, we will promote and have it available for easy access.

## Will more than one dose of COVID-19 vaccine be recommended per patient?

At this time, it's anticipated that COVID-19 vaccines will require two doses separated by 21 or 28 days. The second dose of any COVID-19 vaccine must be completed with the same vaccine brand as the first dose.

## Will people who have already had COVID-19 be able to get the vaccine?

Yes, and it is safe to get vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine if you have been infected in the past. The vaccine works to protect you against a future infection. You don't need a COVID test before vaccination.

## How much will it cost to get vaccinated?

The federal government will cover the cost of the vaccine. It is possible that health care providers may charge an office visit fee, or a fee to administer the vaccine. Health insurance most likely will cover these fees.

## Can any pharmacy or clinic offer the COVID-19 vaccine?

To receive and administer the coronavirus vaccine and supplies, providers must enroll in a federal vaccine distribution program, coordinated through the state immunization program (unless they are part of a national chain that registered directly with the CDC). The federal government will procure and distribute the vaccine and ancillary supplies at no cost to enrolled providers. Walgreens and CVS Pharmacies have enrolled directly into the COVID-19 Vaccination program with CDC to receive federal vaccine allocations to vaccinate residents and workers in long-term care facilities.

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

CDC and FDA encourage the public to report possible side effects (called adverse events) to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>. 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. Reports to VAERS help CDC monitor the safety of vaccines. Safety is a top priority.

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.

## Should pregnant women be vaccinated?

Pregnant and breastfeeding women may choose to receive the COVID vaccine. Pregnant women should talk with their doctors before making the choice. You do not need to take a pregnancy test before you get your vaccine. Women who are breastfeeding may also choose to get vaccinated. The vaccine is not thought to be a risk to a baby who is breastfeeding.

## Are there any fetal cells in the vaccine?

Neither the Pfizer nor the Moderna vaccine involved the use of cell lines that originated in fetal tissue taken from the body of an aborted baby at any level of design, development, or production, but they are not completely free from any connection to abortion, however, as both Pfizer and Moderna made use of a tainted cell line for one of the confirmatory lab tests of their products. Tainted cell line means those tissues taken in the 60's and 70's which were used to see if a response to the vaccine occurred but not in the vaccine itself.