

COVID-19 Vaccine

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I go to receive the vaccine?

Local information on vaccine eligibility, locations, and how to sign-up for appointments may be found at <https://www.pcchd.org/306/COVID-19-Vaccine-Information>. Updated information on vaccine availability and link to scheduling an appointment can be found at vaccinefinder.org.

Do I need to wear a mask and social distance after getting the vaccine?

We now know that vaccinated individuals are much less likely to get infected with COVID-19, they are also less likely to get seriously ill from it or to pass it on to other people. Therefore, if you are fully vaccinated you are safe to remove your mask both indoors and outdoors except in specific settings such as: healthcare settings and public transportation. You should also follow your city and state mandates as they change based on the number of new cases in the community.

What can I do now to stay safe until I receive the vaccine?

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid crowds
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces
- Avoid touching your face (eyes, nose and mouth)
- Wash your hands often for 20 seconds with soap and water
- When washing your hands with soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

Yes, the vaccine is safe. While this is the first time mRNA technology has been used on such a large scale, the technology is not new. Moreover, the clinical trials that were done to get these vaccines approved underwent all the necessary phases to ensure both the safety and efficacy of these vaccines. No steps were skipped in the development of these vaccines. Tens of thousands of people were enrolled collectively in these two clinical trials. Millions have received the vaccines in the US and around the world since then with close monitoring and reporting of any side effects.

Is the vaccine safe if I am pregnant or planning on getting pregnant?

Those who are pregnant and/or planning to become pregnant can receive the vaccine if they choose to vaccinate. Original vaccination studies did not include pregnant women so data was initially limited. This is no longer the case due to a large number of pregnant women getting the vaccine since then with close monitoring and side effect reporting. All major medical organizations now urge pregnant women to get vaccinated. Pregnancy has been noted to increase risk of severe disease with COVID-19 in addition to the risk of premature birth. If there are concerns or questions, talking with your health provider may help you make the best decision for you. For women planning to get pregnant, it is important to note that unfounded claims linking COVID-19 vaccines to infertility have been scientifically discredited.

Is it safe for me to receive the vaccine if I have a medical condition?

Those with a medical condition can receive the COVID-19 vaccine safely. People with specific comorbid conditions such as but not limited to obesity, lung disease, heart disease or kidney disease are at increased risk of severe disease when infected with COVID-19. If there are concerns or questions, talking with your health provider may help you make the best decision for you.

Is there a risk for severe allergic reactions to the vaccine?

Allergic reactions can occur but have shown to be very rare. Some, with a history of allergies to some components of the vaccine, have experienced severe reactions, known as anaphylaxis that can be treated. All individuals who administer these vaccines are trained to treat anaphylaxis if it does occur. Discuss your allergies with your health care provider prior to vaccine administration if you have concerns.

Will I contract COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No. The COVID-19 vaccine is not a live vaccine. Some short-term side effects that are possible are, redness and swelling at the site of the injection., fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, fever, nausea, malaise, and swollen lymph nodes. These symptoms may occur within two days after the shot and last one to two days. Side effects may be more frequent after the second shot and less frequent among older adults

Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I am currently infected?

No. You cannot receive the vaccine while infected. It is important to follow isolation guidelines while infected with COVID-19. Once your isolation has been discontinued and you are no longer ill you can receive the COVID-19 vaccine if you choose to.

How far apart are COVID-19 vaccine doses?

The Pfizer-BioNTech doses should be given three weeks (21 days) apart and the Moderna doses should be given one month (28 days) apart. Remember, the second dose should be obtained at the same location as the first. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine only requires one dose.

Now that there are more vaccine options, should I be requesting one vaccine over the others?

There are no recommendations for special populations to receive one kind of vaccine. In an effort to establish herd immunity, curb the spread of the virus and limit the emergence of more worrisome virus mutants, it is recommended that people receive any of the vaccines as they become available to them. If you have specific concerns as to the vaccine you are receiving please discuss them with your healthcare provider.

Is it safe to vaccinate my child (12+)?

Yes, the Food and Drug Administration (F.D.A) has given the *Pfizer vaccine* emergency use authorization after studies showed both its safety and protective ability in children aged 12 and older.

Why should I vaccinate my child?

While children are less likely to get sick from COVID-19 as we have seen throughout this pandemic, they are still just as likely to get the infection and spread it to others. As we start planning to phase our society back to normal reducing the number of people who can get infected or pass on this infection is key!

With the spread of the delta variant and possibly other variants, will the current vaccines protect me?

All of the 3 available vaccines in the US offer great protection against severe disease and hospitalization. This protection includes all the variants we have encountered so far including the delta variant.

Why is a booster needed?

Some patient populations including people who are over 65 years of age, those older than 50 with underlying medical conditions and people with severe immunocompromise (recipients of solid organ or bone marrow transplants and people with some autoimmune conditions on therapy) are not able to mount as much of an immune response to vaccines. These people would benefit from a 3rd dose to stimulate their weakened immune system and prevent them from getting seriously sick because of COVID. It is important to note that individuals with normal immune systems continue to be very well protected against severe disease and hospitalizations.

Who is eligible to receive a booster vaccine?

- 1) People 65 years and older
- 2) People 18+ and live in long term care facilities
- 3) People 18+ and have underlying medical conditions
- 4) People 18+ and work in high risk settings

Can I get any type of COVID-19 vaccine for the booster?

Yes. At this time people may choose to get the same vaccine they originally received or mix and match other vaccines. If you have questions about the benefits/drawbacks of mixing and matching speak to you health care provider.