

# Common COVID Vaccine-Related Questions and Answers

## Why should you get the COVID-19 vaccination?

The vaccine helps protect you by creating an antibody immune response without having to experience sickness. Experts believe the vaccine may also help keep you from getting seriously ill, even if you do get COVID-19.

## Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe? Does it have any side effects?

All COVID-19 vaccines being used have gone through rigorous study to ensure they are as safe as possible. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted Emergency Use Authorization for the COVID-19 vaccines. This means that while the study period was shortened, trials were conducted that showed these vaccinations have met stringent criteria for safety and effectiveness.

The most commonly reported side effects are pain, swelling, and redness at the injection site. Some people have experienced chills, tiredness, and headache. In rare cases, people have experienced severe allergic reactions such as anaphylaxis.

## Most vaccines require two doses. What will happen if your second dose is late or you miss it?

Fortunately, based on clinical studies, there is some 'wiggle room.' You can actually go 3-7 days past the date when you're supposed to get the second shot, but you should stay as close to the scheduled date as possible. However, if you miss your second dose by a month or more, check with your physician about whether to repeat the series.

## When does immunity kick in?

Generally, it takes at least a week or two for immunity to develop following the final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

## Can a COVID-19 vaccine infect you with the virus?

None of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines or those in development in the U.S. contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. That means the vaccine won't make you sick with the coronavirus. However, it's important to note that a person could get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 *just before or after* getting the vaccine and still get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

## **If you have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do you still need to get the vaccination?**

Yes. Right now, experts don't know how long someone is protected through natural immunity from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. Some early evidence suggests this immunity may not last long. Therefore, the vaccine is important to protect you from getting reinfected with COVID-19.

## **Many people who get COVID-19 only have mild symptoms. Is a vaccine really necessary?**

Being protected from getting sick with COVID-19 is important because even though many people only have a mild illness, others may get seriously ill, have long-term health effects, or even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you don't have risk factors for severe complications.

## **What safety precautions are necessary to take until someone can get the vaccine?**

Wear a mask over your mouth *and* nose, stay at least six feet away from others, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and wash hands frequently and thoroughly.

## **Do you need to wear a mask and social distance once you've completed your vaccination??**

Yes. Not enough information is currently available to say when it might be safe for people to stop wearing masks and avoiding close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus after vaccination. Even with a full vaccine, people can still infect others. So, it is important to wear a mask over nose/mouth, staying at least six feet away from others, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and practice thorough and frequent handwashing.

## **Will you be required to get vaccinated for work?**

Although vaccination is not mandated by the federal government, employers have the authority to require staff to get vaccinated. If you refuse a vaccine, your employer needs to evaluate the risk or threat this poses to colleagues, customers, and others in the workplace.

## **How do you know if the information you're getting about the vaccine is reliable?**

Before considering vaccine information on the Internet, check that it comes from a credible source and is updated on a regular basis. For instance, information posted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is researched, written, and approved by subject matter experts, including physicians, researchers, epidemiologists, and analysts.

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