

COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet



December 2020

What you should know

COVID-19 has taken its toll, and we know that certain populations have been more severely impacted, including the elderly and those with underlying health conditions like diabetes, heart conditions and obesity. The great news is that the vaccines are 94-95% effective at any age, and those with underlying health conditions.

COVID-19 vaccine is now available for long-term care residents and their essential family care givers. The vaccine will help us get back to normal life by preventing infections, decreasing outbreaks and lowering your chance of serious illness. If you live in a long-term care facility, or are the representative of someone who does, you will soon be contacted by your facility to get registered to receive the vaccine. Long-term care residents will not have to leave the facility to get vaccinated. Please sign up as soon as you are contacted.

The vaccine has become available so quickly because it builds on work already completed over the last decade to prevent similar viruses. Every vaccine must pass several tests to make sure it is safe and effective before it is released. The vaccine does not contain any live virus, which means it can't cause COVID-19.

More than 50,000 people from all populations have already tested the vaccines. Side effects reported by Pfizer, the first vaccine to become available, include headache, fever, muscle aches and fatigue. These discomforts are reported to last one to two days and were less likely in older patients participating in the tests. Moderna, the second vaccine to become available, also reported side effects of headache, fever, muscle aches and fatigue with a decreased likelihood in older patients. Vaccination schedules will be staggered within facilities so that not all staff and patients experience side effects at the same time.

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine protects you, the ones you live with and the ones you love. Please take this important step toward getting life back to normal.

About the trials

Thousands of people were included in studies of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, including those ages 65 and older. Researchers determine the safety of the vaccine and how well it works by measuring how the study participants respond. They also watch for side effects. Each vaccine has gone through multiple phases of testing to make sure it is safe and effective. In addition to the CDC and the FDA, the safety of the vaccines will be reviewed by groups of independent doctors and experts.

About the approval process

After all phases of testing are complete, the FDA reviews the research and decides whether to authorize the COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use. The FDA looks at how well the vaccine works, or its effectiveness, and at reported side effects. After the FDA authorizes use of a vaccine, it is made available only to the groups for which it is approved. Researchers, including the CDC, continue to study the vaccine under real-world conditions and continue to check for safety.

Fast Facts

- The vaccine is 94-95% effective in study participants who received the vaccine, including seniors
- People who get COVID-19 after the vaccine have less severe cases
- The vaccine is free
- It is a two-part vaccine, so you must get a second dose of the same vaccine (ex. 2nd Pfizer in 21 days or Moderna in 28 days)
- Most people are immune to COVID-19 7 days after the shot
- Find out more at coronavirus.in.gov/