

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

The information below explains differences and similarities among the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines.

Manufacturer	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	Johnson & Johnson
Who can get this vaccine?	Individuals 12 years of age and older.	Individuals 18 years of age and older.	Individuals 18 years of age and older.
What is in the vaccine?	A list of ingredients can be found at https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download .	A list of ingredients can be found at https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download#page=2 .	A list of ingredients can be found at https://www.fda.gov/media/146305/download#page=2 .
Can I get the vaccine if I have had a previous allergic reaction?	You should not get the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine if you had a severe or immediate allergic reaction to any ingredient in the vaccine or after a previous dose of this vaccine.	You should not get the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine if you had a severe or immediate allergic reaction to any ingredient in the vaccine or after a previous dose of this vaccine	You should not get the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine if you have had a severe allergic reaction or an immediate allergic reaction to any ingredient of this vaccine.
Can I get the vaccine if I have a weakened immune system or autoimmune disease?	Yes, you may receive a COVID-19 vaccine. However, information about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines for people who have weakened immune systems or autoimmune conditions is not yet available.	Yes, you may receive a COVID-19 vaccine. However, information about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines for people who have weakened immune systems or autoimmune conditions is not yet available.	Yes, you may receive a COVID-19 vaccine. However, information about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines for people who have weakened immune systems or autoimmune conditions is not yet available.
Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?	Yes, but people who are pregnant or breastfeeding should still discuss options with their healthcare provider.	Yes, but people who are pregnant or breastfeeding should still discuss options with their healthcare provider.	Yes, but people who are pregnant or breastfeeding should still discuss options with their healthcare provider.
Are there side effects?	Side effects may occur. They typically last a few days. The most common side effects are pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, and nausea. More people experienced side effects after the second dose than after the first.	Side effects may occur. They typically last a few days. The most common side effects are pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, and nausea. More people experienced side effects after the second dose than after the first.	Side effects may occur. They typically last a few days. The most common side effects are pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, and nausea.

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How many doses of vaccine do I need?	The manufacturer recommends two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine given 21 days apart .	The manufacturer recommends two doses of Moderna vaccine given 28 days apart .	The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine is a one-dose vaccine.
Will the vaccine still work if I only get one dose?	According to a CDC study, one dose of the Pfizer vaccine was 80% effective in preventing infection two weeks after vaccination. Both doses are still recommended, as effectiveness jumped to 95% two weeks following the second dose.	According to a CDC study, one dose of the Moderna vaccine was 80% effective in preventing infection two weeks after vaccination. Both doses are still recommended, as effectiveness jumped to 94.1% two weeks following the second dose.	According to a CDC study, the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine was found to be 66.3% effective in preventing illness at least 14 days after vaccination. The vaccine is considered 85% effective after 28 days against severe infections.
Do I still have to socially distance or wear a mask after the first or second dose of the vaccine?	On May 13, 2021, the CDC provided new guidance stating fully vaccinated people do not need to socially distance nor wear masks indoors or outdoors in most settings. Masks will still be required in healthcare settings, at businesses that mandate them, and on public transportation.	On May 13, 2021, the CDC provided new guidance stating fully vaccinated people do not need to socially distance nor wear masks indoors or outdoors in most settings. Masks will still be required in healthcare settings, at businesses that mandate them, and on public transportation.	On May 13, 2021, the CDC provided new guidance stating fully vaccinated people do not need to socially distance nor wear masks indoors or outdoors in most settings. Masks will still be required in healthcare settings, at businesses that mandate them, and on public transportation.
Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?	No. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine does not contain SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19.	No. The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine does not contain SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19.	No. The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine does not contain SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19.
How long will the vaccine protect me?	We do not know how long protection lasts for those who receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Researchers are working to learn more about both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity.	We do not know how long protection lasts for those who receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Researchers are working to learn more about both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity.	We do not know how long protection lasts for those who receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Researchers are working to learn more about both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity.

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What should I tell my vaccination provider before I get the vaccine?	Tell the vaccination provider about medical conditions, including if you have allergies or fever, bleeding disorder or if taking blood thinner medication, have weakened immune system, are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, are breastfeeding, or have received another COVID-19 vaccine.	Tell the vaccination provider about medical conditions, including if you have allergies or fever, bleeding disorder or if taking blood thinner medication, have weakened immune system, are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, are breastfeeding, or have received another COVID-19 vaccine.	Tell the vaccination provider about medical conditions, including if you have allergies or fever, bleeding disorder or if taking blood thinner medication, have weakened immune system, are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, are breastfeeding, or have received another COVID-19 vaccine.
When was the vaccine authorized?	The U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued EUA for the vaccine on December 11, 2020.	The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued EUA for the vaccine on December 18, 2020.	The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued EUA for the vaccine on February 27, 2021.
How does the vaccine work?	<p>The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is a two-dose series, separated by 21 days. It is injected into a muscle. If you receive a first dose of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the CDC recommends the second dose should also be Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.</p> <p>The Pfizer vaccine is an mRNA vaccine. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html</p>	<p>The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is a two-dose series separated by 28 days. It is injected into a muscle. If you receive a first dose of Moderna vaccine, the CDC recommends the second dose should also be Moderna vaccine.</p> <p>The Moderna vaccine is an mRNA vaccine. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html</p>	<p>The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine is a one-dose vaccine. It is injected into a muscle.</p> <p>The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a viral-vector vaccine. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/viralvector.html</p>

Definitions:

A **severe allergic reaction** (anaphylaxis) is when a person needs to be treated with epinephrine or EpiPen® or if they must go to the hospital.

An **immediate allergic reaction** happens within 4 hours of getting vaccinated and may include symptoms, such as hives, swelling, and wheezing (respiratory distress).

Weakened immune systems include people with HIV and those with weakened immune response due to other illnesses or medication.

An **autoimmune disease** is a condition in which your immune system mistakenly attacks your body. Examples include: Type 1 Diabetes, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis, Lupus, etc.

EUA stands for Emergency Use Authorization. A EUA allows the FDA to authorize vaccines more quickly during a public health emergency.

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References:

Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine>

Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of the **Pfizer-BioNTech** COVID-19 Vaccine to Prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Individuals 12 Years of Age and Older: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>

Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/moderna-covid-19-vaccine>

Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of the **Moderna** COVID-19 Vaccine to Prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Individuals 18 Years of Age and Older: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download>

Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/moderna-covid-19-vaccine>

Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/janssen-covid-19-vaccine>

Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/janssen.html>

Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of the **Janssen** COVID-19 Vaccine to Prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Individuals 18 Years of Age and Older: <https://www.fda.gov/media/146305/download>

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Interim Recommendation for Use of **Janssen** COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, February 2021: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7009e4.htm>

CDC:

Frequently Asked Questions about Covid-19 Vaccination: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

Understanding How Covid-19 Vaccines Work: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/how-they-work.html>

Possible Side Effects After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html>

Covid-19 Vaccines for People with Underlying Medical Conditions: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/underlying-conditions.html>

Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of Covid-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fvaccines%2Fcovid-19%2Finfo-by-product%2Fclinical-considerations.html#Interchangeability

CDC Real-World Study Confirms Protective Benefits of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines: <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0329-covid-19-vaccines.html>

Interim Estimates of Vaccine Effectiveness of Bnt162b2 and Mrna-1273 Covid-19 Vaccines in Preventing Sars-Cov-2 Infection Among Health Care Personnel, First Responders, and Other Essential and Frontline Workers — Eight U.S. Locations, December 2020–March 2021a: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7013e3.htm?s_cid=mm7013e3_w