



COVID-19

Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines

Updated Nov. 12, 2021

NOTICE: CDC now recommends that children between the ages of 5 and 11 years receive the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine. Learn more about vaccines for children and teens.

What You Need to Know

- Everyone ages 5 and older can get vaccinated against COVID-19. Learn how to find a COVID-19 vaccine.
- COVID-19 vaccines are effective at helping protect against severe disease and death from the virus that causes COVID-19, including known variants currently circulating (e.g., Delta variant).
- The benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks, which are rare.
- As with other routine vaccines, side effects may occur after vaccination. These are normal and should go away within a few days.
- People who are fully vaccinated can resume many activities they did before the pandemic. However, people should wear a mask indoors in public if they are in an area of substantial or high transmission.
- People who are moderately to severely immunocompromised are recommended to get an additional primary dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna).
- Certain groups of people are recommended to get a COVID-19 booster shot.
- Unlike many medications, COVID-19 vaccine dosage does not vary by patient weight but by age on the day of vaccination.
- People can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines, including flu vaccine, at the same time.



COVID-19 Vaccine ChatBot

Use SmartFind chat tool to find answers to common COVID-19 vaccination questions.

Get Started

Availability of Vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines are widely accessible in the United States. Everyone ages 5 years and older should get a COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible. COVID-19 vaccines are available for everyone at no cost, regardless of their immigration or health insurance status.

Many doctors' offices, retail pharmacies, hospitals, and clinics offer COVID-19 vaccinations. Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find locations that are offering vaccines to everyone ages 5 years and older. Parents can check with their child's healthcare provider, their local pharmacy, and health department about whether they offer COVID-19 vaccination. Learn more about how to find a COVID-19 vaccine.

Effectiveness

COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting people from COVID-19 and help keep adults and children from getting seriously sick. COVID-19 vaccines can reduce the risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Getting everyone ages 5 years and older vaccinated can help the entire family, including siblings who are not eligible for vaccination and family members who may be at risk of getting very sick if they are infected.

Adults and children 5 years and older who are fully vaccinated can resume activities that they did before the pandemic. Learn more about what people can do when they have been fully vaccinated.

Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines are effective, especially at keeping adults and children from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19. Learn more about the benefits of getting vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. It typically takes 2 weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19.

People are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after their second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, or 2 weeks after the single-dose Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. To receive the most protection, people should receive all recommended doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. Learn more about who is recommended to get an additional primary dose or a booster dose.

People can sometimes get COVID-19 after being fully vaccinated. However, this only happens in a small proportion of people, even with the Delta variant. When these infections occur among vaccinated people, they tend to be mild.

Learn more about the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines.



Safety

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Vaccines cannot give you COVID-19. You may have side effects after vaccination. These are normal and should go away within a few days.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines. COVID-19 vaccines have undergone and continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history, which includes studies about adolescents and children. This monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe.