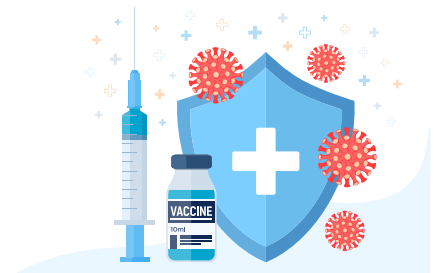


COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ



Will a vaccine prevent COVID-19?

During the clinical studies, researchers determined that at least two of the COVID-19 vaccines prevent infection and reduce transmission. The phase 3 clinical trials for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, for example, showed the vaccine prevented COVID about 90-95% of the time (efficacy). It was also determined that the two vaccines prevented a severe case of the disease nearly 100% of the time.

How will we know if the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective?

The purpose of “phase 3 clinical trials” is to determine if a vaccine is safe and effective. In a “phase 3 trial,” many volunteers are given the vaccine, and their health is tracked consistently over a long time. At this point the trial volunteers have been tracked a median of two months and will be followed for a total of two years. A vaccine is determined to be safe based on the data collected from all of the volunteers that participated in the trial. The FDA reviewed phase 3 clinical trial initial results for the Pfizer vaccine and determined it was safe and effective. We anticipate that the same will be the case for the Moderna vaccine.

How do COVID-19 vaccines get approved?

The vaccine trials have had data monitoring review for safety and efficacy throughout their trials. They have completed their enrollment and safety monitoring and will now be reviewed by an FDA advisory committee to determine if they should be authorized for emergency use (Emergency Use Authorization - EUA). An EUA is granted for products that do not yet have full FDA authorization to facilitate their availability as medical countermeasures for use in public health emergencies.

Can a person become immune to COVID-19 without getting a vaccine?

One of the things that we’ve learned as we’ve faced COVID this year is that those who were infected with COVID-19 have some level of immunity. Very rare cases of reinfection have been documented, so the future protection from being infected with COVID-19 is not yet clear. We also do not know how long this protection will last. For this reason, it is recommended that people that have had the disease also get vaccinated.

How long does the vaccine protect people from COVID-19?

It is too soon to know how long a vaccine will last and is currently being determined. The longest time that immunized patients (from the clinical trials) have been followed is less than six months, and they still had potent immunity at this time point.

If I already had COVID-19, should I still get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, over the year, the CDC has recognized that in rare cases people that have had COVID-19 infection in the past can get re-infected. It is also not yet known how long protective immunity lasts after infection. For that reason, even those that have had COVID in the past should strongly consider being vaccinated.

Should older adults get the vaccine?

Because the risk of severe cases of COVID, and death, is higher for our older population, experts agree that this is a critical group who should be vaccinated.

What about children or expectant mothers?

Studies show that the two vaccines available starting in December are likely safe and effective for almost everyone. Still, they are currently not authorized for those under 16 or pregnant women.

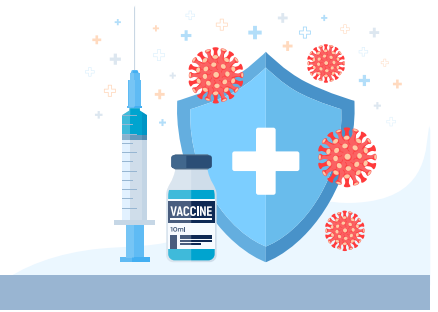
What is the difference between the Pfizer and Moderna Vaccine?

Both vaccines are very similar. Only minor elements differ in the two vaccines. Their storage conditions also vary. Both vaccines are based on science called mRNA vaccines.

How do mRNA vaccines work?

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines contain something called messenger RNA, or mRNA. mRNA produces proteins in our cells, in this case the COVID spike protein, that then triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response produces antibodies, and those antibodies protect us from getting infected if we are exposed to the real virus.

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Can someone get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

It is impossible to get COVID-19 disease from the two vaccines that will be available soon. There is no virus in either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. The trials have recorded normal symptoms related to vaccination, such as pain at vaccination site, fatigue and fever. These are an indication of the immune response and will be more likely after the second vaccine dose.

After I've been vaccinated, Do I need to wear a mask and social distance?

Yes. We do not know yet if people who have had the vaccine can still be carriers of the virus even if they themselves don't get sick. Masking, social distancing, and hand washing practices will need to be a vigilant routine for all of us until the CDC changes its direction. We hope that our infection control steps, in addition to widespread vaccination, will finally bring this pandemic under control.

How will the vaccine be rolled out?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed guidance on who should get the vaccine first. Populations at risk should get the vaccine first, and then others should be vaccinated in descending order of risk.

We already know that health care workers and nursing home residents and staff are considered high risk and will be given access to the vaccine first. The initial vaccine will be distributed through each of the 50 states. State guidance will determine local processes to administer the vaccine through large health systems, national pharmacies and nursing homes. Health care workers, first responders and others at high risk will be first in line, and then the vaccine will become available to the general population. It is expected that the general population will have vaccine access based on age and medical conditions that place a person at higher risk from infection, but those details are still under consideration.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine be mandatory?

The COVID-19 vaccine will not be mandatory at this time. As the vaccine is provided to 20 million Americans in the next month, we will have more information. We need to know much more about the duration of the immune response and the vaccine's long-term effects. Just as we do with annual flu vaccines and occurrences of COVID, AccentCare will track vaccinations. We will follow CDC and other state and federal recommendations.

At some point, will local pharmacies deliver the COVID-19 vaccine?

Two national pharmacy chains have signed contracts with the federal government to administer the vaccine, and more are likely to follow. It is expected that the first supplies the pharmacies receive will be administered to nursing homes and essential workers. The general public will have access later and we are hoping to be able to contract for vaccinating our employees. More to come as we move forward.