

Frequently Asked Questions

We regularly get questions regarding COVID-19, testing and vaccinations. Following are answers to the most frequently asked questions.

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PFIZER FAQs for Parents and Guardians

Is the vaccine safe for children?

Preliminary data from the vaccine trial, showed the vaccine was well tolerated in children 12-15 years old. All participants in the trial will continue to be monitored for long-term protection and safety for an additional two years after their second dose.

How effective is the vaccine for younger groups?

In the trial, there were 0 cases of COVID-19 in the ~1,100 children who received the Pfizer vaccine and 16 cases in the ~1,100 children who received placebo. That means the vaccine was 100% effective in preventing COVID-19. They also saw that the vaccinated children had high levels of antibodies in their blood. The same dose was used in all age groups.

Do children need the vaccine when they have not been affected by the virus as much as adults?

Yes. Although COVID-19 in children is usually milder, they can still spread the infection and occasionally get very ill themselves, require hospitalization or have lingering effects. In the U.S. over 3,000 children who contracted COVID-19 have been hospitalized with an uncommon inflammatory syndrome known as Multisystem-Inflammatory Syndrome in Children or MIS-C. Another reason to consider a COVID-19 vaccine in children is to help protect the broader community.

Do children experience the same side effects?

Yes, from the trial children who received Pfizer experienced similar side effects to the young adults, and side effects were more common after the second dose. The most common side effects include pain at the injection site, headache, body aches, fever, chills, and fatigue. The side effects generally clear up within 48 hours.

COVID-19 Vaccination FAQs

What are the most common side effects of a COVID-19 vaccine?

The most common side effects of a COVID-19 vaccination are like symptoms of other vaccinations and include pain at the injection site (most common), fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, and fever. These symptoms are usually mild and resolve within one or two days and can be managed with acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Side effects appear to be more common after the second dose of Moderna or Pfizer but can occur after the first dose.

These same side effects can occur after the J&J vaccine which is a single dose. Most people can continue to perform their normal daily activities. If you have symptoms lasting for more than three days, contact your primary care provider.

Additionally, a harmless, red, warm, and itchy rash has also been seen to appear 7-10 days after the first dose of the Moderna vaccine, in the arm where the vaccines was given. It is a brief immune response, and the rash should disappear after a few days. It does not appear to be dangerous and you should still receive your second Moderna vaccine dose. If the rash lasts longer than a week, spreads to a different area of the body, and/or grows larger than 5-6 inches, please contact your provider.

Will a COVID-19 vaccination make me sick?

It is possible you might feel unwell for a few days after receiving the vaccination, but these symptoms are signs that the vaccine is working (although the side effects don't need to occur for the vaccine to work) and should not last more than two or three days. The vaccine will not cause you to be infected with the COVID-19 virus.

How will I know whether my symptoms are from the vaccination or a COVID-19 infection?

In general, if the symptoms are only at the injection site (like arm pain or redness), then this is most likely due to the vaccination. If you experience symptoms of a flulike illness with muscles aches and fatigue and fever that last more than two or three days or occur more than a week after your vaccination, it could be a COVID-19 infection. It also might be COVID-19 if you have a cough, congestion, or new loss of taste or smell. In that case, you would need to follow up with your provider for further evaluation. Again, these would not be from the vaccination.

Is there any COVID-19 vaccine approved for use in children?

The Pfizer vaccine has received Emergency Use Authorization for children age 12 and older. At this time the other vaccines only have emergency approval for ages 18 and older.

I have an egg allergy. Can I receive a COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain egg and are not produced in an egg-based medium.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine contain any preservatives?

No. None of the vaccines contains preservatives at this time.

Does the COVID-19 vaccine or vaccine vial contain any latex?

No. The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine and the vaccine vials do not contain any latex.

How long will it take to build immunity (protection) after getting the COVID-19 vaccination?

It typically takes 2 weeks after the second Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, and 2 weeks after the Janssen vaccine for the body to build full immunity.

How long does immunity last after I receive a COVID-19 vaccination?

The duration of protection against COVID-19 is currently unknown and will continue to be studied.

Can I receive just one dose and be protected?

Completing both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine is highly recommended. After 1 dose of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine, efficacy was 50.8% to 92.1%. After two doses, efficacy was 94.1% for the prevention of symptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection. These trials were **not** designed to fully observe efficacy after just one dose, so receiving 2 doses to complete the series is highly recommended.

The Janssen vaccine is the only single-dose vaccine currently available. Overall efficacy rate for preventing hospitalization after vaccination was 93.1% and overall efficacy rate against symptomatic COVID-19 is 66.3%.

Can I receive COVID-19 vaccine doses from different manufacturers?

The safety and efficacy of a mixed series have not been evaluated, so your first and second COVID-19 vaccinations should come from the same manufacturer.

Can I receive other vaccinations on the same day as my COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes, there are no restrictions on receiving other vaccines at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccines.

If I was previously infected with COVID-19, should I still receive a COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes you should still receive a COVID-19 vaccine even if you have previously been infected with COVID-19. The vaccine trial results show the vaccine is still safe and efficacious to use on patients who have a history of COVID-19. Patients who have had COVID-19 typically produce antibodies; however, it is unknown how long they will last. Antibody levels produced by a vaccine tend to be higher and suggest better immunity than those from a natural infection.

As long as you are no longer having symptoms and not under quarantine, you may schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment.

Do I need to get tested for COVID-19 infection or antibodies before receiving a COVID-19 vaccination?

No. Testing for acute infection or antibodies is not recommended before receiving the vaccination.

I received monoclonal antibody and/or plasma therapy for COVID-19. When can I receive a COVID-19 vaccination?

Vaccination should be deferred for at least 90 days to avoid the treatment interfering with vaccine-induced immune responses. If you contracted the virus after receiving your first mRNA COVID-19 vaccine dose (Pfizer or Moderna) and received monoclonal antibody treatment, you should receive your 2nd mRNA vaccine dose 90 days after receiving the treatment.

Are the COVID-19 vaccines live?

No. They are not live vaccines.

Should pregnant and/or breastfeeding women receive the COVID-19 vaccination?

Pregnant women were excluded from the vaccine trials, and there is no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccinations in pregnant or breastfeeding women. However, given the widespread use of the vaccines it appears that the COVID-19 vaccines seem to be safe during pregnancy. Given that COVID-19 infection during pregnancy may be harmful to the mother and the baby, most obstetricians are now recommending the vaccine to their pregnant patients. Data are not available to assess the effects of the COVID-19

vaccine on the breastfed infant or on milk production/excretion. Studies in humans are ongoing, and more are planned. A discussion with her healthcare provider can help her make an informed decision.

Will receiving the COVID-19 vaccination affect any future COVID-19 test (PCR or rapid) results?

No. Receiving a COVID-19 vaccination will not affect the results of future COVID-19 tests.

Will receiving the COVID-19 vaccination affect the results of a COVID-19 antibody test?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccination may affect results of a COVID-19 antibody test because the vaccine will cause your body to produce antibodies. The CDC discourages antibody testing for checking immunity after getting the vaccine. Certain tests may not be searching for the same antibodies that the vaccine triggers.

Can I spread the virus after receiving the vaccine?

We don't know for certain, but early evidence suggests that the vaccine will stop you from spreading the virus. Most importantly, the vaccine is highly effective in preventing the virus from making you very ill or being hospitalized.

How much protection does the vaccine offer?

It appears the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines that have been reviewed offer ~95% protection against infection and Janssen offers ~86% protection against severe forms of COVID-19 in the United States.

I was potentially exposed to COVID-19 in the community. Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccination?

We recommend you wait until your quarantine period has ended before receiving a COVID-19 vaccination to avoid exposing healthcare personnel (HCP) or other persons during a vaccination visit.

I have had an allergic reaction to certain foods, vaccines, and/or oral medications in the past. Can I still receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Most likely you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine; however, we may want to monitor you for a longer period of time after vaccination. The CDC considers a history of severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) to any other vaccination or injectable therapy (e.g., intramuscular, intravenous, or subcutaneous) as a **precaution** but not a contraindication to vaccination. In addition, allergic reactions to foods, pets, venoms, the environment, latex, or oral medications (including the oral equivalents of injectable medications)

are not a contraindication or precaution to vaccination with mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

Patients who have had a severe allergic reaction to any components used to make the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines should not receive the vaccine. If patients experienced a severe allergic reaction (i.e. anaphylaxis) after 1 dose of either Pfizer or Moderna, they should not receive a second dose.

However, if you cannot receive Pfizer or Moderna, you may be able to receive Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. People who have received one Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, but cannot receive the 2nd dose, should wait at least 28 days after the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine dose to receive Janssen vaccine. You should not receive the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine if you have a known polysorbate allergy.

As a child, I was allergic to penicillin and other antibiotics and experienced a rash. Am I at risk for a serious reaction to a COVID-19 vaccination?

A history of mild allergic reaction like hives alone, without signs or symptoms of anaphylaxis, to a vaccine, injectable therapy, or oral med is not a contraindication or precaution to either COVID-19 vaccine and would not make you more at risk for a serious reaction to a COVID-19 vaccination. You should not receive a COVID-19 vaccination if you are allergic to any ingredient used to make the vaccine. Persons with a history of mild allergic reactions will be observed for 15 minutes after receiving the injection, and those with a history of anaphylaxis will be observed for 30 minutes after. You may also want to talk to your primary care provider about seeing an allergist. Recent research has shown that many penicillin and other antibiotic allergies identified in childhood may not persist into adulthood.

How do I report if I have any side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccination?

V-safe is a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccination. Through v-safe, you can quickly tell the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention if you have any side effects after getting a COVID-19 vaccination. Depending on your answers, someone from the CDC may call to check on you and get more information. If you need a reminder, v-safe will also alert you to get your second COVID-19 vaccine dose. To sign up for v-safe, please visit [V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker | CDC](#).

I have had Bell's palsy. Is it safe for me to receive a COVID-19 vaccination?

Cases of Bell's palsy were reported following vaccination in participants in all 3 COVID-19 Vaccines' clinical trials. However, the Food and Drug Administration does not consider these to have occurred at a higher rate than expected in the general population and has not concluded that these cases were causally related to vaccination. Until more information and evidence are available, persons with a history of Bell's palsy may receive a COVID-19 vaccination unless they have a contraindication for vaccination. Any occurrence of Bell's palsy following COVID-19 vaccination should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).

I'm on a blood thinner. Can I receive a COVID-19 vaccination?

Taking blood thinners or having a bleeding disorder is not a contraindication for intramuscular injections, but you need to be aware that any bleeding at the injection site may take longer to stop and you may experience increased bruising.

I have dermal fillers. Can I receive a mRNA COVID-19 vaccine?

Infrequently, people who have received dermal fillers may develop swelling at or near the site of filler injection (usually face or lips) following a dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. This appears to be temporary and can resolve with medical treatment, including corticosteroid therapy. mRNA COVID-19 vaccines may be administered to people who have received injectable dermal fillers who have no contraindications to vaccination. No additional precautions are needed. You should contact your healthcare provider for evaluation if you develop swelling at or near the site of dermal filler following vaccination.

Should I pre-medicate with Tylenol or an NSAID (like Motrin or Aleve) before receiving my COVID-19 vaccine?

Routine preventive use of antipyretics or analgesic medications for the purpose of preventing post-vaccination symptoms is **not currently recommended**, as information on its impact on mRNA COVID-19 vaccine-induced antibody responses is not available at this time. Antipyretic or analgesic medications may be taken after your vaccine, if necessary, to treat local or systemic symptoms.

COVID-19 Signs and Symptoms

About COVID-19

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that is transmitted by a virus. It can cause

respiratory symptoms that range from mild to severe. Older people and those with chronic conditions are most at risk for more severe symptoms.

How COVID-19 spreads

COVID-19 spreads through droplets of saliva or nasal discharge. These droplets are tiny and not visible to the naked eye. They may be in the air or on surfaces. You may get the virus by encountering an infected person who sneezes, coughs, or talks. You also may be exposed to the virus if you touch a shared surface and then touch your face or eyes. Wearing a mask and maintaining a social distance of at least 6 feet from others is the best way to protect yourself against infection. For more information, see the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) FAQ page](#).

COVID-19 signs and symptoms

You may have COVID-19 and be asymptomatic. If you do have symptoms, they may appear anywhere between two and 14 days after exposure to the virus.

Symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Treatment for COVID-19

For most healthy people, the treatment for COVID-19 is to manage symptoms. This includes taking over-the-counter medicines such as acetaminophen and staying hydrated. Patients also should quarantine, get plenty of rest, and isolate from others, including those in their household. If your symptoms worsen, you may require medical care in a hospital. There are new treatments available, including a monoclonal antibody intravenous infusion. This may be given as an outpatient treatment in a hospital, usually in the ER. Hospitalization and other antiviral treatment may be required for severe cases. Your primary care provider can advise you on the best course of action, depending upon the severity of your symptoms.

COVID-19 Antibody Testing

Please note that at this time, COVID-19 antibody testing has limited usefulness.

If you had COVID-19 infection or have been vaccinated then you will likely have antibodies. At this time the antibody test cannot determine your level or protection or the timing of vaccination. Some people on immunosuppressive medication may not respond as well to the vaccine and can discuss with their healthcare provider if antibody testing would help clarify their risk of getting infected. We can test to see if that's the case, but the test has to be done at the right time. If it's given too early, you may get a false negative. It's also important to understand the pros and cons of the test and the implications of the results. That's why it's important to have your primary care provider assist you in doing this test.

Here's the process to schedule a test:

1. Schedule a video appointment so we can understand the timing, symptoms, and reason for testing.
2. If the Vanguard provider believes that testing is appropriate for you, we will promptly schedule your antibody test.
3. You'll visit one of our offices for a quick blood test.
4. We'll contact you with the results and see if you have any additional questions.
5. We will bill your insurance.*

*Antibody tests are billed according to your individual insurance company's policy. Medicare and major insurance plans are accepted.