

COVID-19 VACCINE

Frequently asked questions



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How safe is the vaccine?

- **The COVID-19 vaccine is very safe.** All vaccines go through the same four phases of development. No steps were skipped or rushed, despite the speed of the process. Scientists from around the world were able to build on decades of vaccine knowledge to speed up development.
- Tens of thousands of people of various ages, races and ethnicities participated in vaccine trials to ensure they are safe and effective, and the vaccines have since been given to millions of people safely. The evidence from those studies was closely reviewed by the Food and Drug Association (FDA) and independent organizations.

2

Will the vaccine change my DNA?

- **No. The vaccines will not change your DNA or genes in any way.** The vaccine teaches your body how to fight COVID-19 so that if the virus enters your body, your body will know how to fight it. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

3

When can I get the vaccine?

- **Anyone over 5 years old is currently eligible.** Children 5-17 can receive the 2-dose Pfizer vaccine. No vaccine is authorized yet for children under age 5. Visit the [Public Health Madison & Dane County website](#) to book an appointment.

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How will I feel after getting the vaccine?

- **Mild side effects are common, but should go away in a day or two.** Side effects are a normal sign that your body is building protection.
- Side effects may include fever, tiredness, muscle pain, chills, joint pain and headache.

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How long after getting vaccinated will I be fully protected?

- **It takes about two weeks for your body to build protection (immunity) after your final dose.** People who receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine (one dose) are fully protected after about two weeks. People who receive the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine (two doses), are fully protected two weeks *after their second dose*.
- **At this point, we don't know how long protection lasts.** Researchers will have a better understanding once there is more data available.

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Will there be a cost to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- **No.**

7

Are the current vaccines effective against the new strains?

- **Yes, the current vaccines seem to be effective against the new strains.** However, virus mutations (changes) are common. Researchers will continue studying the effectiveness on new strains.

8

Can I get the vaccine if I have an existing medical condition such as diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, etc.?

- **Yes,** people with underlying medical conditions can get COVID-19 vaccines as long as they have not had a severe or immediate allergic reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccine. Adults with some pre-existing medical conditions may want to talk with their medical provider.

9

Should I still get the vaccine if I already had COVID-19?

- **Yes, you should be vaccinated even if you already had COVID-19.** Experts do not yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19.

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Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I have had an allergy or anaphylactic reaction to foods/medications/other vaccines?

- **Allergy to vaccines:** If you have had an immediate allergic reaction - even if it was not severe - to a vaccine or injectable therapy for another disease, ask your doctor if you should get a vaccine.
- **Allergy to foods, insects, etc.:**
 - If you have a history of severe allergic reaction to food, bee stings (or other insects) or latex that **you use an Epi Pen** to treat, you should receive your vaccine at a clinical site (like a hospital) rather than a nonclinical site (like a drive thru), so you can be monitored closely.
 - If you have a history of an allergic reaction to food, bee stings (or other insects) or latex that is **not** anaphylaxis, and therefore **do not use an Epi Pen** to treat, there is no restriction to receiving your vaccine, but it is still recommended to receive your vaccine at a clinical site.

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Are children eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Children 5-17 are currently eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine. No vaccine is authorized yet for children under age 5.

For more information, visit publichealthmdc.com/vax