COVID-19 Vaccine Basics

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and work

A vaccine is designed to prevent diseases. COVID-19 vaccines tell your body how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines help protect you from COVID-19 disease. If you do get sick with COVID-19 after being vaccinated, it is less likely that you will get very sick or have to go to the hospital. **Everyone age 6 months and older should get vaccinated**.

The COVID-19 vaccines were carefully tested in a diverse group before being authorized or licensed. Tens of thousands of Black, Latinx, American Indian, and Asian people participated in the Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax vaccine studies. We know that these communities, along with our disability and LGBTQ+ communities, are often excluded from the benefits of medicine and experience ongoing and historical racism, medical trauma, and abuse. These factors worsen the impact of COVID-19 for these communities and emphasize the importance that the vaccine works and is safe for all.

No safety steps were skipped in the making of the COVID-19 vaccines. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) required safety data for the vaccines to be authorized or licensed. Additionally, medical researchers continue to monitor the vaccines for safety.

Available vaccines

At this time, there are three different vaccines available: Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax (Novavax is only authorized for persons age 12 and older). The CDC does not recommend one of the vaccines over the other. Each vaccine helps protect people from getting very sick with COVID-19. Not all vaccination locations will have each vaccine available. The most important thing is not to miss an opportunity to get vaccinated. For more information on the vaccines, visit CDC: COVID-19 Vaccines (www.cdc.gov/covid/vaccines/).

What to expect when you get the vaccine

- People trained to give the vaccine will tell you about the process, discuss any potential risks or side effects, and answer questions.

- The vaccine and number of dose(s) you receive depends on your age, vaccine, previous COVID-19 vaccines received, and if you are immunocompromised.

- All people age 5 years and older should receive one dose of 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine.

- Children 6 months through 4 years and people with certain health conditions may need multiple doses to be up to date.

- If needed, it is important to get all vaccine doses recommended for you to have the best protection against COVID-19. For more information visit CDC: Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines (www.cdc.gov/covid/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html).

- You may be monitored after you get the vaccine for any serious side effects.

Side effects

Some people have side effects after getting the vaccine. Side effects usually last one or two days and usually do not prevent you from daily activities. You may have:

- A sore arm
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Fever/chills

If you have serious side effects, go to a hospital, or call 911.

The vaccine does not contain

- Preservatives
- Pork products or gelatin
- Egg
- COVID-19 live virus

Why should you get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- **Protect yourself** from severe COVID-19 and long-term impacts of COVID-19.
- **Support your community**. Protect those who cannot be vaccinated (very young children) or do not respond well to vaccination (those with weakened immune systems).

How to get vaccinated

- Check with your health care provider about appointments.
- Contact providers or pharmacies near you, including pediatric and family medicine clinics, primary care providers, federally qualified health centers, local public health agencies, tribal health agencies, community sites and clinics, and Indian Health Service locations.
- Watch for vaccination clinics being offered at schools or other community locations in your area.

Minnesota Department of Health
PO Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
651-201-5000
health.mn.gov

09/18/2024

To obtain this information in a different format, contact health.communications@state.mn.us