

## COVID-19 Vaccines

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Why COVID-19 vaccination is important

##### Will COVID-19 vaccination help keep me from getting COVID-19?

Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you. Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Vaccines will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Stopping the pandemic requires using all the tools we have available.

#### What to expect when you get vaccinated

##### Is there a cost to get vaccinated?

No fees will be charged to get vaccinated. There will be no cost sharing from insurance plans. Vaccine doses purchased with U.S. taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. COVID-19 providers agree to administer vaccine regardless of an individual's ability to pay and regardless of their coverage status, and may not seek any reimbursement, including through balance billing, from a vaccine recipient. However, vaccine providers will be able to charge administration fees for giving or administering the shot to someone. Vaccine providers can get this fee reimbursed by the patient's public or private insurance company or, for uninsured patients, by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Provider Relief Fund.

##### Will more than one dose of COVID-19 vaccine be required?

Yes. The current vaccines need two shots to be effective. It is very important that you receive the vaccine from the same manufacturer both times and get the doses within the required time frame to ensure the best protection from COVID-19. If you receive the Pfizer vaccine the second dose needs to be 21 days after the first dose, and the second dose of the Moderna vaccine needs to be 28 days after the first.

##### How will I be reminded to get the second dose?

HEART AND HEALTH MEDICAL plans to use multiple ways to notify you of your second dose. COVID-19 vaccination record cards (reminder cards) will be provided when you receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The card provides room for a written reminder for a second-dose appointment. If you have a smartphone, consider taking a photo of your vaccination record and entering the date the next vaccine dose is due in your calendar. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC has the "V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker" application for your phone that can send you a reminder.

*To ensure the best protection from COVID-19, it is very important to not skip the second dose. The second dose must be from the same vaccine manufacturer, so it will be important to ensure that where you receive your second dose has the right vaccine. If you can, it would be best to*

For More Information Visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>



*follow up with the same provider who gave you your first shot.*

### **Will people who have already had COVID-19 be able to get vaccinated?**

Yes. People who have had COVID-19 can still get a vaccine. CDC recommends getting it after you have recovered. You should check with your health care provider if you have questions.

### **If I already had COVID-19, should I get vaccinated? Shouldn't I be immune?**

Yes, you should still get the COVID-19 vaccine, even if you have had COVID-19. There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again; this is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this.

### **Do I need to keep wearing a mask after I get vaccinated?**

Yes. New Yorkers should continue to wear masks, social distance from those not in their household and wash their hands, even after receiving vaccine. More information is available on the CDC website in their FAQ document.

## **Safety of the vaccine**

### **Is the vaccine safe?**

We understand that some people may be concerned about getting vaccinated. Safety is the first priority. The process used to approve the COVID-19 vaccines is the same proven process that was used to create safe and effective vaccines for the flu, polio, measles, whooping cough and more. While the COVID-19 vaccines are being developed as quickly as possible, routine processes and procedures remain in place to ensure the safety of any vaccine authorized or approved for use. More information about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine is available at the CDC website:

### **How can a safe vaccine be made so quickly?**

Vaccine development typically takes many years. However, scientists had already begun research for coronavirus vaccines during previous outbreaks caused by related coronaviruses (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome). That earlier research provided a head start for rapid development of vaccines to protect against infection with COVID-19. No steps were skipped in the development of this vaccine but modifications to the process were made to shorten the timeline without sacrificing safety, such as:

- Overlapping phase I and phase II clinical trials. Phase I studies include a small number of people and evaluate whether the vaccine causes an immune response and is safe. Scientists looked at data from a group of people in phase I as phase II was progressing to make these evaluations.
- While completing large phase III trials, manufacturers began producing the vaccine, so that if it were shown to be safe and effective, they would have large numbers of doses ready.
- While waiting for a vaccine to be ready, many other aspects of vaccine delivery were prepared (e.g., developing plans for how to distribute the first, limited quantities available, ensuring adequate supplies for distributing and administering vaccine.)

For More Information Visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>

### **Can this vaccine give me COVID-19?**

No. This vaccine gives your body a code which helps it recognize the virus, so your body can fight it off in the future.

### **Can I get other vaccines at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine?**

CDC recommends that no other vaccine be given 14 days before or after you get the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Can women who are pregnant get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The CDC has recommended that pregnant women and women planning to become pregnant may be offered the vaccine, if they are in one of the vaccine priority groups and in consultation with their health care provider.

### **Are there any tests people have to get before getting the vaccine?**

The CDC is not recommending a routine pregnancy test or an antibody blood test for COVID-19 before you get the vaccine. You should talk with your health care provider about any questions you have due to your personal, specific medical history.

### **Does the vaccine have any side effects?**

After COVID-19 vaccination, you may have some mild side effects. This is a normal sign that your body is building protection. The side effects from COVID-19 vaccination may feel like flu and might even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Your arm may be sore, red, or warm to the touch. You may experience a low-grade fever, headache, and just a general feeling of “not yourself”. These are signs that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to, which is produce an immune response for you to have protection against this disease.

### **Can people with a history of allergic reactions get the vaccine?**

Most people who have food or environmental allergies can still get the vaccine. Prior to getting vaccinated, talk to your health care provider if you have had any severe reactions to medicines or vaccines in the past. Learn more about COVID-19 vaccines and rare and severe allergic reactions.

### **How are side effects being tracked?**

The CDC runs the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS), a national system to detect any possible symptoms or side effects that occur after someone has had a vaccine. Anyone who has had a vaccine can report concerns to VAERS.

### **What is V-safe?**

When you get your vaccine, you will get a link to access the “V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker” for your phone. Through V-safe, you can quickly tell the CDC if you have any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. CDC may follow up by phone to get more information. V-safe will also remind you to get the second COVID-19 vaccine dose when needed.

For More Information Visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>



## **Vaccine distribution/prioritization**

### **Can I get the second dose of the vaccine in a different state than where I got the first dose?**

It's important to get the second dose of the same vaccine in the time frame required for your vaccine. You might be able to get that in a different state, but you should check before traveling to ensure availability in that state. Consult that state's COVID-19 vaccine website. Make sure you have your immunization records, including the card when you get your first dose.

### **Who will get the vaccine first?**

Distribution of the vaccine in New York will be in a phased approach because it will be several months before supply increases enough to vaccinate everyone.

The CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) have defined different vaccination phases. The ACIP recently voted to update interim vaccine allocation recommendations. For further information review, The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Updated Interim Recommendation for Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine.

### **When will the vaccine be available to the general public over age 16?**

The vaccine will be available to the general public when supply substantially increases in 2021, possibly in late spring. Until then, priority will be given to health care providers, essential workers, and vulnerable populations (i.e., individuals 65 years of age and older and individuals 16 years of age or older with high risk medical conditions. Individuals 16 and 17 years of age will need to receive the Pfizer vaccine only. The Moderna vaccine is only recommended for those 18 years and older.)

### **Do we have to wait for one group to be vaccinated before the next group can receive vaccine? How long will it take to move between phases?**

Vaccination of groups in one phase will likely not be complete before vaccination in another phase begins. Vaccination in these phases will likely overlap.

The timing of the start of vaccination in a phase is dependent on the guidance from CDC or ACIP, supply of vaccine from the manufacturer, how vaccine is allocated from the federal level to New York, and capacity to administer the vaccine to populations.

We hope to be able to offer vaccination to all individuals age 16 or older in New York in late spring. Individuals 16 and 17 years of age will need to receive the Pfizer vaccine only. The Moderna vaccine is only recommended for those 18 years and older.

### **I am a Phase 1A worker, can I still get a vaccine?**

Yes. As we move forward through phases and open our vaccination services more, we can still ensure that all eligible persons from previous phases and those who missed opportunities during any phase can be vaccinated. ACIP has put forth guidance that states it is not necessary to vaccinate all individuals in one phase before initiating the next phase; phases may overlap.

For More Information Visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>

## **I am a Health Care Provider, and I haven't been vaccinated yet, what do I do?**

If you are a health care provider who hasn't been vaccinated and you are part of a larger health system, you need to reach out to your employer to see if they have a plan in place on when and how you can get vaccinated. They will help guide you through their COVID-19 vaccination plan and assist you with when and how you can receive vaccine.

If you are not part of a health system and need to be vaccinated, you should reach out to your local health department to schedule to get vaccinated. Please do not call the health department but go to <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/> to find out how to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine.

## **How do I know if I am eligible for vaccine?**

You will know if you are eligible to receive vaccine by reviewing the State of New York prioritization guidance. Based on your risk, you will fit into a priority group and phase. Also stay up-to-date with the information that is being shared through various media outlets. You may also speak with your primary care provider, who can assist you with determining which priority group you fall into based on your risk level. It is encouraged that you speak to your primary care provider about any questions or concerns you may have regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. They know your medical history best and can help guide you.

## **What if someone gets the vaccine who is not on the priority list?**

We want to follow the prioritization guidance as closely as we can because this ensures that everyone will be vaccinated in a timely manner based on vaccine distributions we receive. It allows for vaccination to occur smoothly, so we do not run out of vaccine for those groups who are at highest risk within each phase. If a person is vaccinated outside of the priority list, we will count that dose, however, to best ensure we meet the needs of the entire public in an efficient manner we must follow the established State of New York prioritization guidance the best we can.

## **How do I know if I am a frontline essential worker?**

A frontline essential worker is an individual whose job duties are critical to providing sustainment of life safety and protection to the public. Their role will place them at substantially higher risk of exposure to potentially infectious persons.

## **If I am a frontline essential worker, how will I know how to get vaccinated?**

If you are an essential worker, you will be notified by your employer. Your employer should assist you with arrangements for where you would likely receive your vaccination.

## **Why are Phase 1B and 1C starting at the same time?**

Only parts of Phase 1B and 1C are starting at the same time. This was done for several reasons but The State of New York felt it important to be sure to target vaccinations to populations most affected by severe COVID cases. The greatest number of severe COVID cases and deaths occur in individuals over the age of 64 years of age.

### **I am not in one of these groups, how long do I have to wait?**

There are any factors that will play into when the vaccine will be made available to the general public. The largest factor is the amount of vaccine available to first vaccinate the priority groups. We hope we will be able to offer vaccinations to the general public sometime during the summer.

### **Why are essential workers receiving the vaccine before the general public?**

Essential workers keep systems critical to public health and safety functioning. Workers in essential and specific industries are considered part of America's critical infrastructure, as defined by the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency. Many of these workers have jobs that require significant person-to-person interactions. Current data show that many of these workers are at increased risk for getting COVID-19. Early vaccine access is critical not only to protect them from becoming ill, but also to maintain the essential services they provide to U.S. communities.

### **How are essential workers identified and prioritized to receive the vaccine?**

The State of New York, New York State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, local public health and local emergency management will consider the Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Program as well as continuity of operations plans in prioritization of some workers. Vaccination will be coordinated through local public health. In addition, work is underway to leverage existing relationships with New York corporations that could leverage their own occupational health programs to implement vaccine administration when the appropriate phase is initiated.

### **Why are school staff and child care providers receiving the vaccine before the general public?**

Schools and child care contribute to children's growth and well-being by providing educational instruction; supporting the development of social and emotional skills; creating a safe environment for learning; addressing nutritional needs; and facilitating physical activity. Vaccination of these staff is essential to improve the capacity to have in-person instruction.

### **Will people who are homeless receive the vaccine?**

Yes. Local health departments will coordinate with Federally Qualified Health Centers and other providers to administer the vaccine to homeless individuals.

### **Will tribal populations receive the vaccine?**

Yes. Vaccine will be administered to tribal members through their tribal health clinics.

### **Will migrant workers receive the vaccine?**

Yes. Local health departments will coordinate with Federally Qualified Health Centers and other providers to administer the vaccine.

### **Why are children younger than age 16 not included in the vaccine plan?**

We await further guidance on whether young children will be recommended for vaccination.

Vaccination of young children is not recommended because of limited data on the vaccine safety and efficacy in this group at this time. Young children should still make sure they are up to date on their other important life-saving immunizations.

## **Protecting your privacy**

### **What information will be collected about me when I receive the vaccine?**

When vaccines are administered, your name, address, and vaccine given are required to be reported to the state's registry, called the New York Care Improvement Registry (MCIR).

### **Will information collected about me be shared with anyone?**

Providers and local health departments who have access to the MCIR (after signing the required MCIR Usage Agreement that governs protection of the information) can view a person's record to know what vaccines they have received.

### **What information will be shared? With whom?**

New York will share vaccination information with the CDC but in de-identified aggregate form (i.e., not containing person-level information such as name, date of birth or address).

### **Where can I get more information?**

More information is available about coronavirus on the State of New York coronavirus website. For more information about coronavirus review. <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>