

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs

Answering your questions
regarding the vaccine.



Are the COVID-19 Vaccines Safe?

We are confident both vaccines approved for use in the U.S. (Pfizer and Moderna vaccines) are highly safe and effective. Both were developed in the U.S. and have undergone U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) scrutiny, the most rigorous vaccine approval process on the planet.

Like other medications, the COVID-19 vaccines can have some side effects. All symptoms experienced by trial participants were mild or moderate and were attributable to a normal, healthy immune response. The most commonly reported side effects of the vaccine were arm pain, fatigue, muscle or joint pain, and headache—all among less than 10 percent of trial participants. None were severe nor required hospitalization.

The COVID-19 vaccines DO NOT use the live virus that causes COVID-19, so you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

How do the COVID-19 vaccines work?

The two current vaccines, Pfizer and Moderna, use messenger RNA or mRNA, to trigger the immune system to produce protective antibodies against the coronavirus. These are the first vaccines to use mRNA. It is important to note that neither of these vaccines uses the coronavirus itself, and neither can cause COVID-19.

How do vaccines protect our community?

If 75 to 95 percent of the population is vaccinated, vaccines will not only protect people who get the vaccine, they'll protect people who have not been vaccinated by reducing the rate of person-to-person transmission (herd immunity).

Vaccination has led to community protection from other illnesses, including whooping cough/pertussis.



Are the COVID-19 vaccines effective?

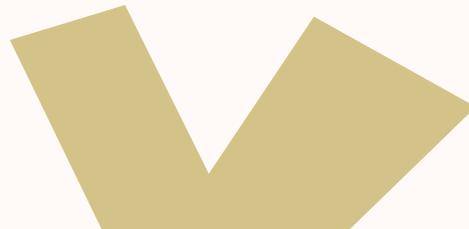
Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are over 94 percent effective, a calculation based on observed infection rates among unvaccinated (placebo) adult participants compared to vaccinated participants in each clinical trial. Efficacy was consistent across age (18+), gender, race and ethnicity demographics. The vaccines have not yet been widely tested in children and adolescents under 12.





Will I need to get a COVID-19 vaccine every year?

At this time, we do not know. Studies on the long-term effectiveness of the vaccine will continue and more information will be released as it becomes available.



When will a vaccine be available to the general public?

Due to limited quantities, at first, vaccine distribution will be limited and prioritized:

Phase 1A includes paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials and are unable to work from home, as well as residents of long-term care facilities.

Phase 1B includes frontline essential workers and individuals 75 years of age and older.

Phase 1C includes other essential workers, persons 65 to 74 years of age, and individuals 16 to 64 years of age with underlying medical conditions.

Phase 2 is a mass vaccination campaign for all persons age 16 years or older.

In 2021, the vaccine supply is expected to increase substantially. Current models suggest that anyone 16 years and older who is not within the initial priority groups should qualify for the vaccine by mid-2021.

How is the vaccine administered?

The two vaccines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration require two doses, either 21 or 28 days apart. Protection is incomplete unless two doses of the vaccine are administered.



Will I need to continue to wear a mask and social distance after I receive 2 doses of the vaccine?

Yes. According to the CDC, while experts learn more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important for everyone to continue using all tools available to us to help stop this pandemic: covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from others. This will offer the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19 until experts understand more about the protection COVID-19 vaccines provide.





Can pregnant or nursing women and women trying to conceive be vaccinated?

There is no data specific for pregnant or nursing patients or women trying to conceive and they should check with their doctors about the risks and benefits of the Covid-19 vaccine.

Both the FDA and ACOG (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists) say the vaccine is safe for pregnant women, nursing moms, and those trying to get pregnant.



Can children be vaccinated?

No, children CANNOT receive the Covid-19 vaccination currently. Moderna requires recipients be at least 18 years of age and the Pfizer vaccine requires a minimum age of 16 years.

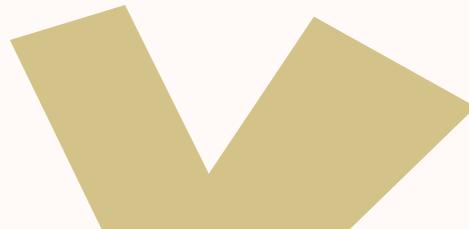
How much will the vaccine cost?

According to the CDC, the federal government purchased hundreds of millions of vaccine doses with taxpayer money, so the vaccine, itself, will be given to Americans at no cost. Vaccine providers will be able to charge a fee to administer the shot, but this fee should be covered by public or private insurance, or by a government relief fund for the uninsured.



If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when it's available?

According to CDC, vaccination should be offered regardless of whether you have had a Covid-19 infection. Current recommendation is to give anyone recovered from Covid-19 the vaccine.



How do I get on a list to receive the vaccination ?

Due to the limited amount of vaccine available for COVID-19, the Branch-Hillsdale- St Joseph Community Health Agency is not currently making appointments or keeping a list of people who are interested in getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

We are following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for prioritization of distribution and administration of COVID-19 vaccines for individuals, and we will keep the public posted as vaccine clinics become available.